United Nations A/70/70

General Assembly

Distr.: General
19 March 2015
English
Original: French

Seventieth session
Item 114 (e) of the preliminary list*
Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections: election of eighteen members of the Human Rights Council

Letter dated 4 February 2015 from the Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

I have the honour to recall that Switzerland has decided to present its candidature for the elections to the Human Rights Council (for the term 2016-2018) to be held during the main part of the seventieth session of the General Assembly. I enclose herewith a copy of the voluntary pledges and commitments undertaken by Switzerland in accordance with General Assembly resolution 60/251.

Promoting universal respect for all human rights is a priority of Switzerland's foreign policy, as stipulated in its Constitution. That commitment is based on the conviction that the realization of these rights promotes both development and peace and security. Also, as the host State of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in Geneva, and in a spirit of cooperation and dialogue, Switzerland is committed to continuing to support and strengthen the Human Rights Council. The Council must be able to fulfil the mandate entrusted to it as the main United Nations body for the promotion and protection of human rights worldwide.

Switzerland has played an active role in the establishment of the Human Rights Council and its institutional strengthening. It has initiated or supported a series of trans-regional initiatives in areas as diverse as the abolition of the death penalty, transitional justice, accountability, the promotion and protection of human rights in the context of peaceful protests, human rights and the environment, human rights and the digital age, education and training in human rights, the safety of journalists, and the prevention and elimination of child marriage and early and forced marriages.

After an extensive preparatory procedure carried out on a participatory basis, Switzerland underwent its second universal periodic review in October 2012 and is

* A/70/50.

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now working in close collaboration with civil society to implement the resulting recommendations.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 114 (e) of the preliminary list.

(*Signed*) Paul **Seger**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

Annex to the letter dated 4 February 2015 from the Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

Candidature of Switzerland to the Human Rights Council for the term 2016-2018

Voluntary pledges and commitments pursuant to General Assembly resolution 60/251

Promoting universal respect for all human rights is a priority of Switzerland's foreign policy, as stipulated in its Constitution. That commitment is based on the conviction that the protection of these rights promotes development as well as peace and security. Accordingly, as the host State of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in Geneva, Switzerland is committed to continuing to support and strengthen the Human Rights Council, so that it can fulfil the mandate entrusted to it as the main United Nations body for the promotion and protection of human rights worldwide. Switzerland also supports the work of OHCHR and the human rights treaty bodies.

Switzerland is presenting its candidature for a third term on the Human Rights Council, this time for the period 2016-2018. During its two previous terms (2006-2009 and 2010-2013), Switzerland undertook, in close cooperation with other States and civil society partners, to ensure that the Human Rights Council would become a strong and effective institution.

Switzerland has played an active role, both in terms of institutional strengthening and in the review process of the Human Rights Council; it has, moreover, been a key driver in the establishment of the Office of the President of the Human Rights Council. Finally, it has initiated or supported a series of trans-regional initiatives in areas as diverse as transitional justice, accountability, the promotion and protection of human rights in the context of peaceful protests, human rights and the environment, human rights and the digital age, education and training in human rights, and the safety of journalists, as well as on the issues of child marriage, early marriage and forced marriage. These initiatives have yielded concrete results, starting with the establishment of new special procedures (Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence, Independent Expert on the issue of human rights obligations relating to the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment), the adoption of new human rights instruments (United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training) and the establishment of the Geneva-based group of Friends of the International Criminal Court. During its years as a member of the Council, Switzerland worked to enable the Council to respond appropriately to human rights violations around the world.

After an extensive and participatory preparation procedure, Switzerland underwent its second universal periodic review in October 2012 and is now working, in close collaboration with civil society, to achieve rapid implementation of the resulting recommendations.

As part of its candidacy for a third term on the Human Rights Council, Switzerland proposes the following voluntary pledges and contributions:

1. To promote and protect human rights at the national level

To promote human rights at the national level, the Swiss Government commits to continue the efforts it has undertaken to fulfil its human rights obligations at both the federal and cantonal levels and to raise awareness among all social actors and bodies with regard to the need to protect, respect and implement those rights, a goal it is reaching by encouraging education and training in human rights, as well as by engaging in advocacy and dialogue. Moreover, it undertakes to cooperate fully with the human rights treaty bodies by submitting regular reports and following their recommendations, as well as with the special procedures mandate holders, to whom it has issued a standing invitation. It intends to fulfil those commitments through the following measures:

- Strengthening coordination among all leaders at the cantonal and federal levels. In this regard, it intends to develop a national ad hoc mechanism to facilitate the development of standard procedures for preparing periodic reports and monitoring the implementation of the recommendations accepted by Switzerland.
- Implementing in good faith the universal periodic review recommendations it has accepted and drafting the third report on the human rights situation in Switzerland in a manner that is transparent and participatory, thereby strengthening dialogue with Swiss civil society.
- Considering the establishment of a national human rights institution, in accordance with the Paris Principles, and assessing the contributions made since the launch of the Swiss Centre of Expertise in Human Rights pilot project.
- Promoting respect for human rights on the part of companies based in Switzerland. In this regard, it intends to elaborate and implement a national strategy based on the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.
- Intensifying its efforts, through public information campaigns, to raise the awareness of the general public and potential sex trade clients on the issue of trafficking in human beings, especially sexual trafficking.
- Reducing inequalities between men and women in the labour market. In this regard, it intends to adopt and implement an effective national strategy that includes programmes to alleviate discriminatory wage gaps and increase the number of women in leadership and decision-making positions.
- Continuing its efforts at the national, regional and local levels to combat racism, discrimination, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance. In this regard, it intends to encourage inclusion of all segments of the population.
- Strengthening efforts to combat violence against women and children and domestic violence. For this reason, it intends to ratify the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence.
- Continuing efforts on behalf of children and youth. In this regard, it intends to take measures to protect them from all forms of violence, promote their rights and foster their participation in decisions affecting them at all levels.

- Keeping under review the possibility of withdrawing the reservations made upon ratification of certain conventions and stepping up efforts to sign and ratify international human rights instruments to which it is not yet party, such as the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure.

2. To promote and protect human rights at the international level

To promote human rights at the international level, the Government of Switzerland undertakes to support States that strive to meet their relevant obligations through various mechanisms, including bilateral and multilateral human rights dialogues, exchanges of experts and advisory services. It intends to fulfil those commitments through the following measures:

- Continuing its commitment to the universal abolition of the death penalty. In this regard, it intends to provide financial and logistical support to the secretariat of the Geneva-based International Commission against the Death Penalty and to raise the issue with the Human Rights Council and other competent United Nations bodies.

- Strengthening efforts to hold accountable the perpetrators of serious human rights violations. In this regard, it intends, in particular, to support the work of the International Criminal Court and the investigation mechanisms of the Council, as well as to continue supporting the work of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence.

- Contributing to the promotion and protection of human rights and strengthening the rule of law, democracy and good governance in partner countries of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation.

- Continuing its commitment to women's rights, in order to empower women and girls, both economically and politically, and achieve gender equality. In this regard, it intends to remain an active member of the relevant multilateral bodies (such as the Commission on the Status of Women of the United Nations and the Gender Equality Commission of the Council of Europe) and support initiatives to end discrimination against women and girls, paying particular attention to efforts to eradicate violence against women and girls, female genital mutilation, and early and forced marriages.

- Contributing actively to procedures to shed light on the responsibility of the private sector and obligations of States and to identify means of redress available in cases of human rights violations by businesses. In this regard, it intends to resolutely promote the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.

- Continuing to work towards universal recognition of the right to water and sanitation through the Council and other competent United Nations bodies. In this regard, it intends to support the Special Rapporteur on the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation.

- Continuing its efforts to combat all forms of discrimination, in particular when they target the most vulnerable, such as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered

and intersex persons. In this regard, it intends to support dissemination of the recommendation of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on the rights of those individuals and actively pursue dialogue with States where they are violated.

- Maintaining its strong commitment to the prevention of torture. In this regard, it intends to support the establishment of national preventive mechanisms, promote the exchange and dissemination of good practices at the regional level and strengthen Geneva's role as a platform for action in that regard.

- Continuing its commitment to the promotion and protection of human rights in the context of peaceful protests by referring relevant situations of concern to the Council.

- Maintaining its commitment to the protection of human rights defenders. In this regard, it intends to implement the Swiss Guidelines on the Protection of Human Rights Defenders which aim to standardize the practices of Swiss diplomatic missions abroad in order to ensure better protection for human rights defenders.

- Maintaining its financial support for non-governmental organizations contributing to the promotion and protection of human rights.

3. To strengthen the Human Rights Council

To promote the strengthening of the Human Rights Council, the Swiss Government undertakes to ensure that this institution can fulfil its mandate under the best possible conditions. It intends to meet this commitment through the following measures:

- Continuing to participate actively in the work of the Council in a spirit of cooperation and genuine dialogue with partners from all regions.

- Taking stock of the progress that the Human Rights Council has achieved by identifying the challenges ahead. In this regard, it intends to convene a high-level meeting in 2016 to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the establishment of the Council.

- Continuing to provide support to the least developed countries that do not have permanent missions in Geneva. In this regard, it intends to provide rent-free premises and low-cost housing, in order to promote their full participation in the universal periodic review.

- Enhancing the participation of non-governmental organizations and national human rights institutions in the work of the Council. In this regard, it intends to work towards ensuring that transparent rules provide further clarity as to how they can be excluded from discussions.

- Continuing to develop training, reflection and know-how on global governance, including human rights. In this regard, it intends to promote the creation, in Geneva, of think tanks and multi-stakeholder platforms, and build the capacity of global governance actors present in Geneva.

- Strengthening efforts to achieve universal representation. In this regard, it intends to extend support to States that do not yet have permanent representation in Geneva.

4. To provide support to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

To reaffirm its support for the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and other relevant United Nations funds, programmes and agencies, the Government of Switzerland undertakes to continue its close collaboration and dialogue with these institutions. It intends to meet this commitment through the following measures:

- Intensifying efforts to strengthen the financial base of OHCHR by undertaking to ensure that the work of that body, carried out in compliance with a mandate from the Human Rights Council, is funded under the regular budget of the United Nations.
- Supporting the efforts of OHCHR to strengthen the capacity of States parties to comply with their obligations under international human rights treaties. In this regard, it intends to provide it with technical and financial support to carry out such activities.
- Continuing to support the human rights treaty body system. In this regard, it intends to work to maintain its independence and high level of expertise and to assist in improving its working methods, thereby enhancing its effectiveness.
- Promoting the integration of human rights in the post-2015 process. In this regard, it intends to foster a rights-based approach to development in the context of its support for United Nations operational activities and in its engagement in high-level political forums as well as ad hoc governing bodies of the funds, programmes and agencies of the United Nations.

United Nations A/70/71

General Assembly

Distr.: General
20 March 2015

Original: English

Seventieth session
Item 114 (e) of the preliminary list*
Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections: election of eighteen members of the Human Rights Council

Note verbale dated 17 March 2015 from the Permanent Mission of Panama to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The Permanent Mission of Panama to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Secretary-General and has the honour to refer to the candidature of the Government of Panama, presented on 8 March 2012, for membership in the Human Rights Council for the period 2016-2018, in the elections to be held in New York in November 2015.

The Mission has the honour to enclose an update to the information on voluntary pledges and contributions of Panama for the promotion and protection of human rights at the national and international levels (see annex).

In this regard, the Government of Panama requests that the present letter and its annex be circulated to Member States and published on the website of the General Assembly.

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Annex to the note verbale dated 17 March 2015 from the Permanent Mission of Panama to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Spanish]

Candidature of Panama to the Human Rights Council, 2016-2018

1. Panama is a nation in which many races and faiths converge and live in peace as a result of an institutional framework that upholds democracy and the protection of human rights, concepts which are rooted in its culture and enshrined in its Constitution and legislation. Panama was demilitarized by popular will and has a long tradition of promoting dialogue as a conflict resolution mechanism both domestically and internationally.

2. Panama accords priority to convergence, tolerance, mediation, unity in diversity, integration and respect for human rights and civil liberties.

3. Its foreign policy is founded on the principle of promoting and supporting the values of peace, understanding, solidarity, the rule of international law in all its forms and cooperation for shared prosperity.

4. Panama played a leading role in the drafting of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. The former President of Panama, Ricardo J. Alfaro, one of the champions of the Declaration, submitted the first draft of the document and proposed that it should be included in the Charter of the United Nations. While the draft presented by Mr. Alfaro was not adopted, the diplomats gathered in San Francisco in May 1948 did establish a Commission on Human Rights. Panama was a member of that Commission several times. Following the 2005 World Summit, from 2006 to 2007, Panama, through its Permanent Mission to the United Nations in New York, actively contributed to the establishment of the Human Rights Council. The Permanent Representative at the time, Mr. Ricardo A. Arias, served as co-Chair during the discussions that led to the decision to replace the aforementioned Commission with the Human Rights Council, to serve as an organ of the General Assembly.

5. The Republic of Panama hereby presents its first ever candidature to the Human Rights Council, for the period 2016-2018 and, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 60/251, submits the following for consideration by the members of the Assembly.

Progress in the area of human rights

6. The State of Panama is determined to protect and strengthen the exercise of human rights through the adoption of laws and international conventions and the implementation of policies to foster respect for those rights. The Constitution sets forth individual and social rights and duties, fundamental guarantees and the right to culture, education, health care and social security with a view to building an equitable society without distinction as to creed, race, religion or political affiliation. The State promotes and protects the fundamental rights of citizens and foreign nationals throughout its territory.

7. Panama also has a national human rights institution, the Office of the Ombudsman, an independent entity that monitors the promotion and protection of

the rights and fundamental guarantees enshrined in the Constitution and in international conventions. In 1999, the Office of the Ombudsman was granted "A" status accreditation by the International Coordinating Committee of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights; that accreditation was reconfirmed in 2006.

8. Furthermore, a number of new autonomous and semi-autonomous institutions were set up to monitor and promote a wide range of economic, social and cultural rights; these bodies include the National Institute for Women, the National Secretariat for Disabilities, the Executive Secretariat of the African Descendant Ethnic Group, the National Council on Childhood, Adolescence and the Family, the Committee for the Prevention of Violence against Women and the Vice Ministry of Indigenous Affairs.

9. In addition, Panama has signed most of the human rights conventions and protocols.[1] In response to the 2010 universal periodic review, Panama ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons, the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness and the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance. The State also submitted to the Human Rights Council an open invitation to the special procedures and mechanisms of the universal and regional human rights systems.

10. Panama has also ratified the eight fundamental Conventions of the International Labour Organization in order to guarantee human rights in the workplace; as such, it provides the necessary framework to endeavour to improve conditions for decent individual and collective labour.

11. The Government of the Republic of Panama considers that the cycles of the universal periodic review have contributed significantly to strengthening the human rights agenda in the country. As an outcome of the first cycle in 2010, Panama established, by executive decree, a national standing commission to ensure implementation and follow-up of the commitments undertaken at the national and international levels. The role of this commission is, inter alia, to prepare national human rights reports, to participate in the development and coordination of Government policies and actions to protect human rights, and to promote the drafting of bills on the subject. Its reports are the product of a wide consultation process between officials of the three branches of the Government, including the Office of the Ombudsman, and with the participation of academics, national and foreign human rights experts, and civil society organizations.

12. The initiatives resulting from the first universal periodic review cycle include:

(a) The establishment of the Anti-Discrimination Unit in the Office of the Ombudsman. In 2013, the Unit worked with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to draft a protocol to receive complaints concerning cases of racial discrimination against indigenous people and people of African descent;

[1] With the exception of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure.

(b) The establishment of the Prisons Training Academy within the Directorate-General of Prisons, with a view to providing public servants and other individuals working in the prisons with academic training in technical subjects relating to the penitentiary system, in particular criminal enforcement. With the assistance of the Association for the Prevention of Torture and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the Academy developed training courses on the prevention, investigation and punishment of acts of torture;

(c) A bill on judicial service was submitted to the National Assembly. The proposed law, inter alia, establishes a special jurisdiction on integrity and transparency in the judiciary, which will be responsible for prosecuting offences committed by judicial officials and applying the resulting penalties. In addition, a judicial council was established to serve as an advisory body in the judicial branch on issues concerning the Government system. Its functions include ensuring the independence and effectiveness of the courts and guaranteeing officials in the justice system access to the benefits of judicial service. At times, the council invites civil society representatives to participate in its activities;

(d) The judicial branch created the Coordinating Office on Projects to Support Vulnerable Groups. Pursuant to Act No. 82 of 2013 (which sets out measures for the prevention of violence against women and amends the Penal Code to criminalize femicide and sanction acts of violence against women), women who are victims of violence receive free legal aid regardless of their socioeconomic situation. The Act also established the Community Legal Assistants Programme, a mechanism aimed at helping people in vulnerable situations to overcome the administrative and legal barriers that limit their effective access to justice. Additionally, the Programme promotes joint, community-supported activities that contribute to fulfilling the promise of an institutional policy of social service and preventive justice;

(e) The adversarial model has been gradually introduced into the criminal justice system based on the recognition of the rights and fundamental guarantees of those involved in criminal conflict;

(f) The executive branch established various safety programmes that involve civil society, including the "Vigilant Neighbours", "Vigilant Drivers" and "Safe Neighbourhoods" programmes, which provide support to and maintain direct contact with police stations, with a view to collectively ensuring the monitoring and protection of the lives and property of the general population;

(g) In order to document reports of sexual offences, a hotline staffed by qualified personnel was established; the National Police also has a specialized unit that investigates such crimes. Furthermore, the training offered to police units was enhanced through the addition of subjects, including human rights, preventing and responding to gender-based violence, assisting young people at social risk and gangs, into the academic curriculum;

(h) The Secretariat for the Protection of Victims, Witnesses, Experts and Persons Involved in Criminal Proceedings was equipped to provide specialized care to children and adolescents;

(i) Following the ratification and entry into force of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its three Protocols, the Republic of Panama adopted Act No. 79 of 2011, on trafficking and related

activities, which sets out measures for the prevention of this crime and the protection and care of victims;

(j) Act No. 55 of 2003, which restructures the prison system, and Executive Decree No. 393 of 2005, which regulates the Panamanian penitentiary system, sets out the minimum standards for the treatment of prisoners, based on international human rights standards. The State of Panama recognizes that these standards are not yet being fully implemented. However, efforts have been made recently to advance concrete measures aimed at achieving the objectives of those standards. Such measures include a protocol that authorizes human rights organizations to visit prisons as a means of ensuring the transparency of prison management;

(k) Significant progress has been made on gender issues, including the passage of legislation criminalizing femicide and laws on human trafficking and female sterilization, and the adoption of a public policy on equal opportunities for women, following consultations with civil society. The State notes that in the area of economy and labour, women have increased their participation in the labour market, although this has occurred largely in the informal sector. Despite this increase, women have yet to be offered equal pay and equal opportunities to hold leadership and decision-making positions;

(l) The National Secretariat on Childhood, Adolescence and Family was established. It has implemented plans, programmes and measures that aim to protect children and adolescents, taking into account their vulnerable status;

(m) Public policies to benefit children prioritized the drafting of a National Plan on Early Childhood Care; the Plan has been developed and its implementation has begun. The Advisory Council on Early Childhood was established. Its membership includes representatives of public institutions, civil society and the private sector;

(n) Child labour prevalence was significantly reduced. The latest survey on child labour, conducted in 2012, indicates that 50,410 boys and girls between the ages of 5 and 17 were part of the economically active population. That figure represents 5.6 per cent of the total number of children in that age group, a decrease from the figure of 10.8 per cent reported in 2008. However, while the country has made progress in respect of the numbers revealed in previous surveys, the annual rate of reduction is only 1 per cent. It is therefore clear that efforts to eradicate child and adolescent labour and create opportunities for this population to overcome poverty and vulnerability must be redoubled;

(o) The institutional structure for the protection and promotion of indigenous rights has been strengthened. Act No. 88 of 2010, which recognizes the languages and alphabets of the indigenous peoples of Panama and sets out standards for bilingual intercultural education; Act No. 11 of 2012, which establishes a special regime for the protection of mineral, water and environmental resources in the region of Ngäbe-Buglé; and Act No. 33 of 2012, which creates new districts and townships within the Ngäbe-Buglé region, were promulgated. The Vice Ministry of Indigenous Affairs was established through Act No. 64 of 2013.

13. It is estimated that the implementation of the Government Plan for the five-year period from 2014-2019 will help guarantee indigenous peoples' rights and facilitate their exercise, particularly those rights relating to land and natural resources, large-scale investment projects, self-governance and participation, as well

as economic and social rights, including rights concerning economic development, education and health.

14. The Plan reaffirms Panama's commitment to maintaining a continuous dialogue to ensure that regional public policies are developed in consultation with indigenous peoples. Furthermore, respect is shown for the customs and traditions of indigenous peoples and for the right of their traditional authorities to be consulted and involved in decisions that affect their regions.

Voluntary pledges and commitments

15. In presenting its candidature for election to the Human Rights Council for the period 2016-2018, Panama makes the following commitments at the national level:

(a) To effectively implement the recommendations received as a result of the universal periodic review and those offered by treaty monitoring bodies, and to develop a system for monitoring the implementation of such recommendations, in collaboration with the regional office of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and in consultation with civil society organizations;

(b) To ensure that international human rights provisions are incorporated into national legislation, at the constitutional level, where possible, so as to offer the highest degree of protection provided by the country's legal system;

(c) To promulgate comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation that prohibits discrimination in all its forms, including racial and ethnic discrimination, and provides effective implementation mechanisms and resources to establish appropriate civil and criminal penalties for acts of discrimination committed by both public and private actors;

(d) To establish the same legal minimum age of marriage for both sexes. The Government of Panama committed to the agenda on the rights of children and pledged to invest in efforts to reduce the inequity and inequality faced by children and adolescents; in this regard, a bill was presented which amends the Family Code and sets the age of marriage at 18;

(e) To create a national mechanism for the prevention of torture;

(f) To adopt a law that establishes a comprehensive system for the protection of children;

(g) To build a shelter for victims of human trafficking that will provide basic services (accommodation, food, health care, etc.) and specialized interdisciplinary care;

(h) To dedicate special efforts to reducing impunity for crimes of domestic violence against women, including femicide, and sexual crimes against children and adolescents;

(i) To allocate resources to strengthen the National Institute for Women and thus support its effective implementation of Act No. 4 of 1999, on equal opportunities for women, and Act No. 82 of 2013, on preventing violence against women;

(j) To align the procedures for determining refugee status with international standards;

(k) To ensure that human rights education is part of the country's school curricula.

16. At the regional level, Panama commits to:

(a) Continue to support the strengthening of the inter-American human rights system and the implementation of its recommendations;

(b) Promote cooperation among the mechanisms of the inter-American human rights system and those of the United Nations;

(c) Support the regional strategy of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

17. With regard to the Human Rights Council, Panama commits to:

(a) Promote the notion that human rights are universal, indivisible, inalienable, interdependent and mutually reinforcing as well as the concept of the interdependence of development, peace and security and human rights in the Council's activities;

(b) Support the strengthening of international cooperation, in the context of the post-2015 development agenda, as a tool that facilitates and expedites the effective implementation of all human rights;

(c) Promote the highest human rights standards at the global level and foster the development of more and better indicators to improve the monitoring and discussion of such standards;

(d) Strengthen the status of the Human Rights Council as the principal United Nations human rights body;

(e) Support the activities of the Human Rights Council and of its bodies, procedures and special mechanisms in the promotion and protection human rights;

(f) Promote the strengthening of the universal periodic review mechanism;

(g) Support the creation of a mechanism to review and assess on an annual basis the degree to which both Council members and candidates cooperate with the Council and its special procedures, in order to determine the composition of the Council;

(h) Participate actively in the evaluations carried out by means of the universal periodic review process, making recommendations that are responsive to the needs of the States under consideration and that generate dialogue and cooperation;

(i) Ensure that the concept of the exercise of all human rights includes the use of new information technology, such as the Internet;

(j) Support initiatives to mainstream gender equality into all United Nations human rights activities, promote women's economic empowerment and ensure their right to health, including sexual and reproductive health;

(k) Call for more attention to be devoted to the status of girls and their empowerment;

(l) Support the Council's efforts to combat torture and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment, including by strengthening of the work of the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment;

(m) Support initiatives aimed at protecting the life and dignity of human rights defenders;

(n) Back initiatives of the President of the Council that aim to immediately put an end to the intimidation and harassment of individuals and groups that cooperate or seek to cooperate with United Nations human rights mechanisms;

(o) Foster open and honest dialogue with the special procedures and mechanisms of the Human Rights Council and maintain an open invitation for them to visit the country;

(p) Protect the independence of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and support an increase in its budget to enable it to effectively carry out its work;

(q) Ensure that the Council fulfils its mandate to strengthen the promotion and protection of human rights throughout the world and to address human rights violations;

(r) Demand, as appropriate in emergency situations, an effective and immediate response from the system for the protection of human rights.

United Nations A/70/72

General Assembly

Distr.: General
20 March 2015

Original: English

Seventieth session
Items 135 and 142 of the preliminary list*

Programme planning

Report on the activities of the Office of Internal Oversight Services

Strengthening the role of evaluation and the application of evaluation findings on programme design, delivery and policy directives

Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services

Summary

The present report, which has been prepared in accordance with regulation 7.4 of the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation (ST/SGB/2000/8), is the fourteenth biennial report in a series of studies that have been submitted to the General Assembly through the Committee for Programme and Coordination. Using both qualitative and quantitative methods and covering the 2012-2013 biennium, the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) assessed the Secretariat's evaluation capacity, quality and utility and synthesized key results contained in a sample of evaluation reports. This report also presents the OIOS evaluation workplan for 2016-2017 and summarizes the implementation of prior Committee recommendations aimed at improving the quality of Secretariat evaluations.

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15-04447 (E) 010415

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Compared with the prior biennium, there have been some positive developments in 2012-2013 regarding the Secretariat's evaluation function. Evaluation processes and procedures have been strengthened, as evidenced, for example, by the adoption of new evaluation policies by six entities and an increase in the number of entities following up on recommendations from evaluations. These improvements, however, did not translate into higher-quality evaluation reports. Fewer reports received overall positive ratings in 2012-2013 than in 2010-2011 (38 per cent compared with 49 per cent) and evaluation continued to be concentrated in a relatively small number of entities.

Furthermore, gaps identified in the previous biennium, including insufficient resources, inadequate staff competencies and limited buy-in from senior management and staff, persisted in the present one. Focal points from the Secretariat entities cited these very issues as constituting the biggest challenges that they faced in strengthening their respective evaluation functions.

OIOS makes three important recommendations to the Secretariat entities for strengthening their evaluation function:

(a) Develop an evaluation policy;

(b) Establish key evaluation procedures, such as an evaluation workplan, an action plan for implementing evaluation recommendations, and a dissemination plan for evaluation results;

(c) Improve the existing guidelines on planning and formulating the estimated resources for monitoring and evaluation activities.

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I. Introduction

1. The present report is the fourteenth in a series of studies that have been submitted biennially since 1988 to the General Assembly through the Committee for Programme and Coordination, in accordance with the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation (ST/SGB/2000/8).[1] Comments on the report from Secretariat entities were incorporated as appropriate.

2. The objectives of this report are to:

(a) Describe and assess the capacity, quality and utility of the evaluation functions in the Secretariat during the 2012-2013 biennium;[2]

(b) Identify key results contained in a sample of evaluation reports finalized during the 2012-2013 biennium.

3. The report presents the evaluation workplan of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) and reports on the implementation of recommendations made by the Committee for Programme and Coordination in the previous biennial report. OIOS will issue a companion report in the second quarter of 2015 containing scorecards for each Secretariat entity and providing more detailed information regarding evaluation practice and capacity.

4. In concluding its discussion on the previous biennial report, the Committee for Programme and Coordination emphasized that evaluation was a key function with respect to adopting budgetary decisions, since it helped to improve programme design and execution, and formulate policy directives, and contributed to transparency. Evaluation allowed Member States to follow up on programme outcomes in a systematic way. The Committee emphasized that self-evaluation was an essential managerial tool, and that it was the responsibility of senior managers to achieve expected results.[3]

5. There are two types of evaluation conducted in the Secretariat: (a) evaluation undertaken by OIOS or external oversight bodies, in which the evaluation function is external to the entity being evaluated; and (b) evaluation undertaken by the entities themselves, in which the evaluation function is embedded within the entities being evaluated. Both types of evaluation are complementary and necessary, in order to ensure a comprehensive evaluation approach throughout the Secretariat, and serve to inform programme accountability and lessons learned for programme improvement. Evaluation functions also exist along a continuum of independence, ranging from complete organizational independence, such as that of the Joint Inspection Unit, to integration with other programme management functions, such as some embedded functions.

[1] The report has been prepared pursuant to regulation 7.4, which requires that a brief report summarizing the conclusions of the Secretary-General on all evaluation studies be submitted to the General Assembly at the same time as the proposed medium-term plan (now the "strategic framework").

[2] In the present report, "the Secretariat" refers to the 32 entities within the mandate of OIOS (including OIOS itself), as identified in annex I.

[3] See A/68/16, paras. 151-152.

II. Methodology

6. The study discussed in this report encompassed 32 Secretariat entities and used the following methods:

(a) Quantitative and qualitative analyses of evaluation reports finalized in 2012-2013 by 32 entities to determine their attributes, quality and key results (see annex II for information on how those reports were collected and selected for analyses);

(b) A web-based survey of 31 Secretariat entities, conducted from July to September 2014, which had a 100 per cent response rate;[4]

(c) In-person or telephone interviews with focal points from 31 Secretariat entities;[5]

(d) An assessment of new or revised evaluation policies from 2012-2013;[6]

(e) An assessment of planned evaluation budgets for 2012-2013.

7. This report had the following limitations: (a) OIOS might not have received all evaluation reports finalized during 2012-2013, despite having guided focal points on the submission of reports from their respective entities; (b) different sampling methodologies of reports over the past three bienniums to determine their attributes, quality and key results may have limited their comparison; and (c) OIOS did not verify all of the self-reported information received from evaluation focal points who provided responses to the survey and interviews. In some instances, results varied depending on the data-collection method. Analyses were triangulated using multiple data sources to balance these potential limitations and strengthen the report's results. While recognizing that entities may have different evaluation needs and practices, OIOS used the same analytical criteria for all entities in this report in order to present a Secretariat-wide assessment of the evaluation function.

III. Evaluation practice

A. There have been some positive developments in 2012-2013 regarding the Secretariat's evaluation functions

There has been some strengthening of Secretariat structures supporting the evaluation functions

8. In 2012-2013, there were positive developments in Secretariat structures supporting evaluation. Table 1 illustrates differences in the institutional set-ups of

[4] Thirty respondents participated in the survey, representing 31 entities. OIOS was excluded from the survey. The same focal point represented the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support. Not all survey responses were complete; percentages reported are based on the denominator of responses to a specific question.

[5] Interviews were conducted with 30 focal points, representing 31 entities. OIOS was excluded from the interviews. The same focal point represented the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support.

[6] The assessment was based on the United Nations Evaluation Group Norms and Standards for Evaluation in the United Nations System (UNEG/FN/Norms (2005) and UNEG/FN/Standards (2005)). OIOS was excluded from the assessment.

30 evaluation functions representing 31 Secretariat entities, it shows that a large majority (23 of 30) had some evaluation activity and that more than half (17 of 30) had an evaluation unit.

Table 1

Secretariat structures of the evaluation functions by the end of 2013[a]

Stand-alone evaluation unit	*Dedicated evaluation unit within a multifunctional division*	*Unit not dedicated to evaluation (includes other services) within a multifunctional division*	*Not evaluation but has evaluation activity*	*Minimal or no evaluation activity*
UNEP	DPKO/DFS	DGACM	DESA	DSS
UN-Habitat	ECA	DPI	DM	ODA
UNODC	ESCAP	ECLAC	DPA	OLA
UN-Women	OCHA	ESCWA	ECE	OOSA
	UNRWA	ITC	OHRLLS	UNOG
		OHCHR	OSAA	UNON
		UNCTAD		UNOV
		UNHCR		

Source: OIOS survey and interviews.

Abbreviations: DESA, Department of Economic and Social Affairs; DFS, Department of Field Support; DGACM, Department for General Assembly and Conference Management; DM, Department of Management; DPA, Department of Political Affairs; DPI, Department of Public Information; DPKO, Department of Peacekeeping Operations; DSS, Department of Safety and Security; ECA, Economic Commission for Africa; ECE, Economic Commission for Europe; ECLAC, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean; ESCAP, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific; ESCWA, Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia; ITC, International Trade Centre; OCHA, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs; ODA, Office for Disarmament Affairs; OHCHR, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights; OHRLLS, Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States; OIOS, Office of Internal Oversight Services; OLA, Office of Legal Affairs; OOSA, Office for Outer Space Affairs; OSAA, Office of the Special Adviser on Africa; UNCTAD, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development; UNEP, United Nations Environment Programme; UN-Habitat, United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat); UNHCR, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees; UNODC, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime; UNRWA, United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East; UNOG, United Nations Office at Geneva; UNON, United Nations Office at Nairobi; UNOV, United Nations Office at Vienna; and UN-Women, United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women).

[a] Rule 107.2 (b) of the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation states: "The evaluation system shall include periodic self-evaluation of activities directed at time-limited objectives and continuing functions".

9. By the end of 2013, four functions had a stand-alone evaluation unit dedicated solely to conducting evaluations. Five had a dedicated evaluation unit placed within a multifunctional division that also carried out strategic planning, oversight, training and/or guidance functions. Staff in these five units, however, were tasked exclusively with evaluation work, thus ensuring a firewall between evaluation and other management activities. Additionally, eight functions had units within multifunctional divisions with the same staff engaged in evaluation and other activities, such as monitoring, research, partnerships, planning and policy development. Six additional functions performed some evaluation activities without a separate unit. These entities typically had a coordinator and network of staff embedded in substantive divisions who spent a small portion of their time on evaluation activities. Last, seven evaluation functions conducted minimal or no evaluation activity in the 2012-2013 biennium.

10. Compared with 2010-2011, two entities notably improved the independence of their evaluation functions: The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) separated its monitoring and evaluation functions to establish a dedicated evaluation unit in January 2012; and towards the end of 2013, ECA created a dedicated evaluation unit, prior to which evaluation activities had been carried out with monitoring, and embedded in programme planning.

11. Reporting lines remained comparable to those of 2010-2011. Among stand-alone evaluation units, three reported directly to the head of the entity, while the Independent Evaluation Unit of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime reported to both the Executive Director and its governing body. Units within multifunctional divisions reported to the directors of their respective divisions, with the exception of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations/Department of Field Support and the Department of Public Information, which reported to their respective Under-Secretaries-General. The independence of reporting lines in the International Trade Centre weakened in 2013 when its Monitoring and Evaluation Unit began reporting to the Chief of Strategic Planning instead of to the Executive Director.

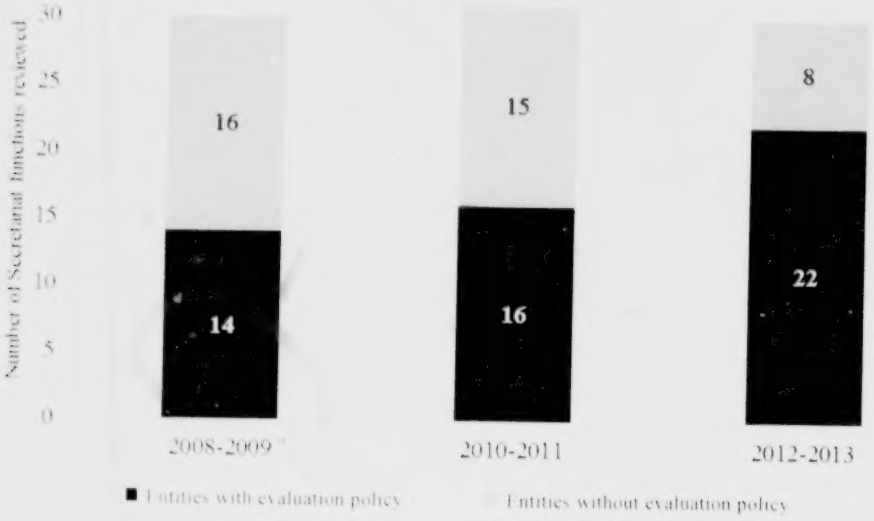
Evaluation processes and procedures have also been strengthened

12. The 2012-2013 biennium saw positive developments in introducing new or revising existing evaluation policies, as evidenced by the key documents outlining the principles, norms and standards for evaluation. As shown in figure I, the number of evaluation functions with evaluation policies has been steadily increasing since 2008. In 2012-2013, the number of functions with an evaluation policy increased significantly, by 20 per cent. A total of 22 functions had an evaluation policy, compared with 16 in 2010-2011 and 14 in 2008-2009. Of the 22, 2 functions revised their evaluation policies, while 6 introduced new ones in 2012 or 2013.[7] When surveyed about significant changes to their evaluation practice, approximately one

[7] Revised policies: Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in 2013 and United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) in 2012; new policies: Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Department of Management, Department of Political Affairs, Economic Commission for Africa, Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, and United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat).

third of evaluation focal points referred to a new or revised evaluation policy. Eight functions (27 per cent) still do not have an evaluation policy.[8]

Figure I
Evaluation functions with evaluation policies, 2008-2013



Source: OIOS review of evaluation policies.

[a] Thirty functions were included in the 2008-2009 and 2012-2013 biennial studies, while 31 (including the Executive Office of the Secretary-General) were included in the 2010-2011 report.

13. The overall quality of evaluation policies remained the same as in 2010-2011. The average rating for the 22 policies in 2012-2013 was 1.5 on a three-point scale, where 0 = "standard was not met", 1 = "standard was somewhat met" and 2 = "standard was met". Three entities (the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) had policies that received a rating of 2 on all standards. In terms of strengths, all policies generally defined evaluation and its purpose (including accountability and learning) and described how entities followed up on evaluation results. On the other hand, policies received generally lower ratings for: not identifying competencies for evaluators (with 12 policies not mentioning them at all) or not defining criteria for selecting evaluations.

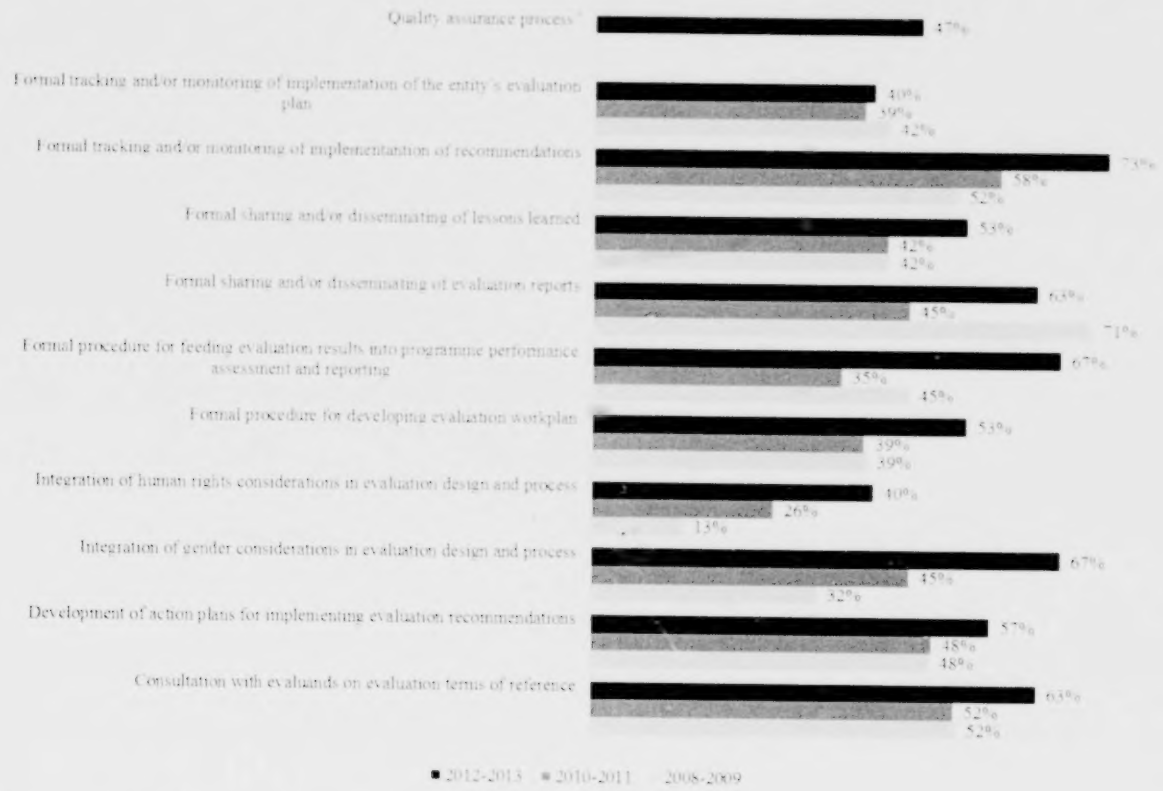
14. There were also improvements in key evaluation processes and procedures across the Secretariat in 2012-2013 (see figure II). More than half of all focal points

[8] Department for General Assembly and Conference Management, Department of Public Information, Department of Safety and Security, Office of Legal Affairs, Office for Outer Space Affairs, United Nations Office at Geneva, United Nations Office at Nairobi and United Nations Office at Vienna.

(53 per cent or more) reported having in place at least 8 out of the 11 evaluation processes and procedures identified below.

Figure II

Evaluation processes and procedures of 30 evaluation functions, 2008 to 2013



Source: OIOS survey.

[a] Reported only in the 2012-2013 biennium.

15. Compared with the two prior bienniums, improvements have been reported for processes and procedures for following up on recommendations. Seventy-three per cent of focal points surveyed reported that formal tracking and/or monitoring of implementation of recommendations was were in place for 2012-2013, compared with 58 per cent in 2010-2011 and 52 per cent in 2008-2009. Furthermore, 67 per cent of focal points surveyed reported having a formal procedure for feeding evaluation results into programme performance assessment and reporting, compared with 35 per cent in 2010-2011 and 45 per cent in 2008-2009. When surveyed about the most significant evaluation successes in their entities in 2012-2013, the most common response from focal points was strengthened evaluation processes and procedures (mentioned by 50 per cent), including better use of evaluation results, recommendation follow-up and participation of programme managers and stakeholders.

16. Dissemination practices have improved compared with the previous two bienniums. Almost two thirds of focal point survey respondents (63 per cent) indicated that formal sharing and/or dissemination of evaluation reports occurred in their entities, compared with 45 per cent in the previous biennium. Forty per cent of focal points reported that their entities disseminated results internally only (mostly through e-mails or by placing them on the intranet), while 60 per cent responded that they shared results internally and externally (mostly by placing them on the Internet). Slightly more than half of focal points (53 per cent) reported having procedures of formal sharing and/or disseminating of lessons learned, compared with 42 per cent in both 2010-2011 and 2008-2009.

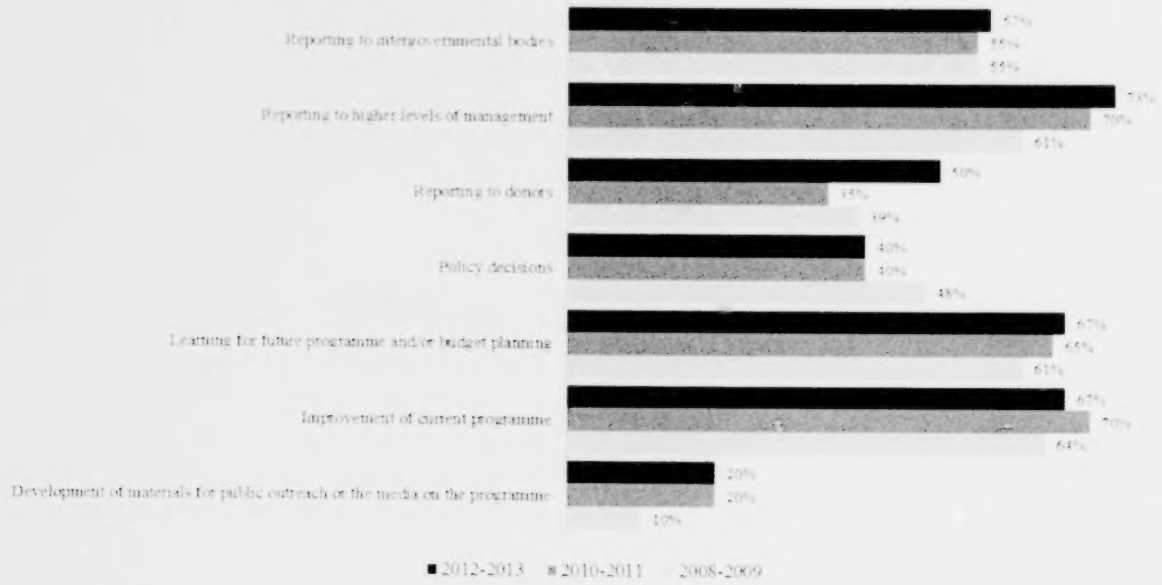
17. Additionally, gender was increasingly integrated into evaluation design and process. Two thirds of focal points surveyed reported that gender considerations were integrated into conducted evaluations, compared with 45 per cent in 2010-2011 and 32 per cent in 2008-2009.

18. Despite these improvements, progress for some processes and procedures continued to be uneven. Fewer than half of evaluation focal points surveyed (approximately 40 per cent) reported that their entities formally tracked and/or monitored the implementation of their entity's evaluation plan for all three bienniums. Additionally, although integrating human rights in evaluation design and process improved over the three bienniums, fewer than half of the focal points (40 per cent) reported that this had occurred in 2012-2013.

Evaluation focal points reported fewer gains in the utility and outcomes of evaluation reports

19. Compared with the previous two bienniums, there have been fewer improvements regarding the utility of and outcomes resulting from evaluation reports (see figure III). Similar to 2010-2011, about 70 per cent of focal points surveyed reported that their entities used information from evaluations in reporting to higher levels of management, in improving their current programmes and in future programming and/or budget planning. The one notable improvement between the two bienniums was in the use of evaluations to report to donors, which increased from 35 per cent in 2010-2011 to 50 per cent in 2012-2013.

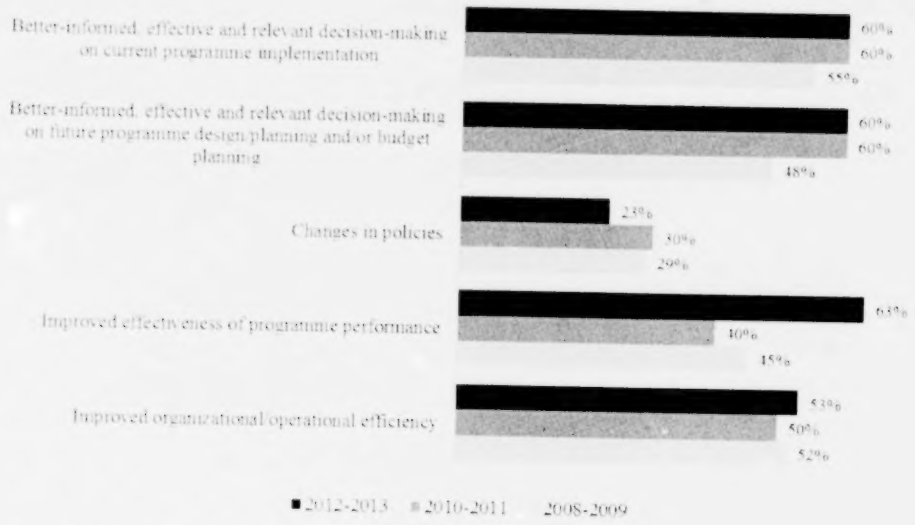
Figure III
Use of evaluation reports of 30 evaluation functions, 2008-2013


Reporting to intergovernmental bodies
Reporting to higher levels of management
Reporting to donors
Policy decisions
Learning for future programme and/or budget planning
Improvement of current programme
Development of materials for public outreach or the media on the programme
2012-2013
2010-2011
2008-2009

Source: OIOS survey.

20. Focal points reported similar levels of outcomes resulting from evaluation reports for each of the three bienniums (see figure IV). The notable exception in this regard was improved effectiveness of programme performance due to evaluation, which increased from 40 per cent in 2010-2011 to 63 per cent in 2012-2013. However, the same proportion of evaluation focal points surveyed in both 2010-2011 and 2012-2013 (60 per cent), reported that the reports resulted in better-informed, effective and relevant decision-making on current programme implementation and future programme design planning and/or budget planning. In their elaboration, nine focal points indicated that evaluation results have informed decisions on programme planning and implementation, including feeding into the development of strategic frameworks. The proportion of focal points reporting changes in policies due to evaluations decreased to 23 per cent in 2012-2013 from 30 per cent in 2010-2011.

Figure IV
Outcomes of evaluation reports of 30 evaluation functions, 2008-2013



Source: OIOS survey.

B. The overall quality of evaluation reports has not improved

21. Despite an increase in the overall number of evaluation reports submitted to OIOS and improvements in some entities, the overall quality of reports has not improved.[9] As shown in figure V, fewer sampled reports received overall ratings of good or excellent in 2012-2013 than in 2010-2011 (38 per cent compared with 49 per cent); and more reports received ratings of fair or poor. The entities whose reports received an average rating of good or higher were ECLAC, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, OIOS, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), UNHCR and UNODC.

[9] In 2012-2013, 379 reports were submitted and 298 were screened as evaluations (79 per cent). In 2010-2011, 297 reports were submitted and 153 were so screened (52 per cent). In 2008-2009, 279 reports were submitted and 166 were so screened (59 per cent).

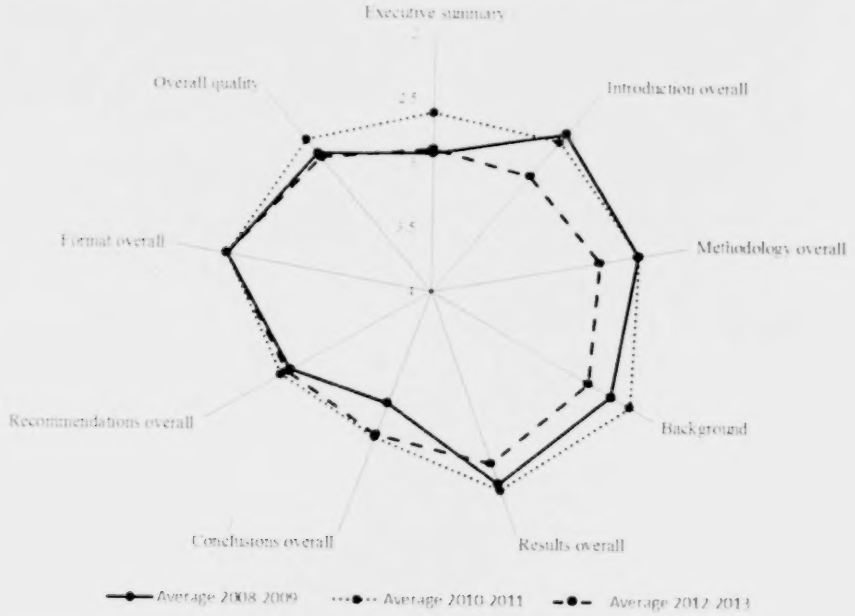
Figure V
Overall quality of sampled reports, 2008-2013

Source: OIOS assessment of sampled evaluation reports.

22. To account for the difference in the number of screened reports among the evaluation functions, a weighted average rating was used. The weighted average of the overall quality of the 102 sampled reports resulted in a score of 2.65, while the weighted average of the 298 screened reports resulted in a score of 2.60, on a scale where 1 = "excellent", 2 = "good", 3 = "fair", 4 = "poor" and 5 = "very poor". No reports were rated very poor. In general, functions that submitted more reports received similar scores to those with fewer reports.

23. Overall, ratings for different sections of evaluation reports were similar for each of the three bienniums (see figure VI). In 2012-2013, the introduction, methodology, background and results sections received slightly lower ratings than during the two previous bienniums. Each section received an overall rating of "fair" with the exception of report format, which received a good rating overall.

Figure VI
Quality of evaluation report sections over the last three bienniums



Source: OIOS assessment of 102 sampled evaluation reports. No reports received a "very poor" rating.

Table 2 summarizes good practices and opportunities for improvement in each of the main sections of the evaluation reports reviewed.

Table 2
Summary of assessment by report section

Evaluation report section	*Average rating*	*Good practices*	*Opportunities for improvement*
Executive summary	Fair (2.90)	– Summarize key results, conclusions and recommendations – Clearly identify executive summary section	– Include an executive summary – Refer to methodology – Distinguish between results and conclusions
Introduction overall	Fair (2.83)	– Reference author – Specify evaluation subjects	– Specify scope, key questions and criteria – State time frame
Methodology overall	Fair (2.68)	– Describe data sources and collection methods	– Address methodological challenges and limitations – Describe analysis methods

Evaluation report section	*Average rating*	*Good practices*	*Opportunities for improvement*
Background	Fair (2.58)	– Provide information to enable understanding of the context within which evaluand operates	– Provide sufficient contextual information to enable understanding of the reason for intervention
Results overall	Fair (2.58)	– Formulate specific results	– Clearly identify results section – Discuss underlying causes for accomplishments/difficulties – Distinguish results with evaluators' opinions
Conclusions overall	Fair (2.81)	– Clearly identify conclusions	– Be forward-looking – Go beyond summarizing the results
Recommendations	Fair (2.73)	– Relate recommendations to results and conclusions – Limit number of recommendations – Make recommendations actionable	– Specify to whom recommendations are addressed
Format overall	Good (2.40)	– Make report easy to read and understand – Consider report's overall logic and cohesiveness	– Use visuals to illustrate important points and information

Source: OIOS assessment of sampled evaluation reports.

24. Incorporating gender and human rights considerations remained a weak cross-cutting area. About half of the 102 reports (52) considered gender issues in their results; however, only 19 reports considered them in their methodology. Incorporation of human rights considerations was even less frequent, with 18 reports including them in their results and 7 in their methodology. These results, based on an independent assessment of evaluation reports, were less positive than what was reported by focal points in the survey on integration of human rights and gender considerations into evaluation design and process.

C. The overall Secretariat evaluation capacity and culture still require strengthening, and significant gaps remain in evaluation coverage

25. Despite the positive developments regarding the Secretariat's evaluation functions and some individual exceptions, the capacity for, and implementation of a culture of, evaluation remain uneven and inadequate. In concluding its consideration of the 2010-2011 biennial report, the Committee for Programme and Coordination

expressed concern that the overall capacity for evaluation remained inadequate for reasons, including:[10]

- Lack of clear identification of resources and dedicated personnel
- Gaps in the skills and competencies of staff Lack of a robust and comprehensive evaluation culture

26. During the 2012-2013 biennium, the same gaps remained, namely:

- Insufficient resources for evaluation
- Inadequate staff competencies
- Limited buy-in by senior management and staff

Capacity may be lacking

27. The adequacy of the level of resources dedicated to evaluation is unclear. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 58/269 entitled "Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change", each budget section is required to identify resources for activities related to monitoring and evaluation. According to the individual proposed programme budgets for 2012-2013, an estimated US$ 57.3 million was planned for monitoring and evaluation activities, which constituted approximately 0.002 per cent of the Secretariat's total planned budget (0.001 per cent for monitoring and 0.001 per cent for evaluation).[11] The percentages changed significantly from those of the 2010-2011 biennial report because peacekeeping missions were included in the calculation of the Secretariat's total planned budget for the 2012-2013 biennium. Excluding peacekeeping missions, the percentages were similar between the bienniums.[12]

28. While acknowledging that budgets come from different funding sources, with some entities funded predominantly by extrabudgetary resources, one must note that the accuracy and reliability of the monitoring and evaluation data in the proposed programme budgets are limited owing to entities' not tracking evaluation resources in a systematic or consistent manner. As also observed in the 2010-2011 biennial report, no standard has been established among the entities for differentiating between monitoring and evaluation activities and resources. According to the 2012-2013 proposed programme budgets, some entities that engaged in more evaluation activities than most other entities reported allocating zero per cent to evaluation,

[10] See A/68/16, para. 148.

[11] See A/66/6 (Introduction). In the analysis, OIOS used the figures for the total 2012-2013 planned budgets, as reported in the individual proposed programme budgets for the 2014-2015 biennium. Estimates reported in form 12 under "mandatory self-assessment" were used to calculate monitoring resources, and estimates reported under "discretionary self-evaluation" were used to calculate evaluation resources. The International Trade Centre was excluded from this calculation.

[12] Excluding peacekeeping missions, in 2012-2013, approximately 0.30 per cent of the Secretariat's total planned budget was allocated for monitoring and evaluation: 0.17 per cent for monitoring and 0.13 per cent for evaluation. In 2010-2011, approximately 0.29 per cent of the Secretariat's total planned budget was allocated for monitoring and evaluation: 0.15 per cent for monitoring and 0.14 per cent for evaluation.

while other entities with minimal evaluation reported greater planned estimates.[13] For example, two entities with dedicated evaluation units reported allocating zero per cent of their total budgets to evaluation, thus illustrating that the financial and human resources indicated in the proposed programme budgets may not reflect the actual practice of many entities.

29. Moreover, there is no universally accepted benchmark for assessing the adequacy of evaluation resources; rather, different calculations exist within the evaluation profession. For example, in a 2010 Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) report, bilateral agencies compared the ratio of the central unit evaluation budget with the overall official development assistance (ODA) budget that each unit was charged with evaluating. Based on these calculations, it was found that bilateral agencies spent, on average, 0.16 per cent of ODA on evaluation (the range being from 0.02 to 0.61 per cent). On the other hand, multilateral development banks calculated that ratio in relation to their administrative budgets, spending, on average, 1.38 per cent of those budgets on evaluation (the range being from 0.50 to 2 per cent).[14]

30. Most of the Secretariat entities had relatively small numbers of evaluation staff. Those entities with an evaluation unit had on average of three professional staff, with the majority of evaluations conducted by consultants. Staff conducting and/or managing evaluations had stronger competencies in evaluation than programme managers engaged part-time in evaluation activities.

31. Insufficient financial and human resources, and inadequate evaluation competencies, were some of the most frequently cited challenges in the focal point survey and interviews. When asked what was most needed to strengthen the evaluation function in their entity, slightly more than half of the focal points interviewed (17 out of 30) indicated the need for financial resources. Half of the focal points interviewed (15 out of 30) cited the need for increased human resources, and 6 stated that stronger evaluation competencies were required, including the presence of staff with an evaluation background, expertise and proper training. Similarly, 18 out of 27 focal points in the survey volunteered their view

[13] OIOS analysis of data from 2012-2013 and 2014-2015 proposed programme budgets. According to the 2012-2013 proposed programme budgets, the Office for Outer Space Affairs planned to spend over 2 per cent of its total budget on evaluation, followed by the Department of Public Information, ECA, ESCWA, the Office of Legal Affairs and the United Nations Office at Vienna with allocations ranging between 0.50 and 1 per cent. At the lower end, according to the form 12 submissions, the Department of Political Affairs, the Department of Safety and Security, the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, the Officer of the Special Adviser on Africa, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) had zero per cent allocated to evaluation. However, according to the annual reports of UN-Women, its total expenditure in evaluation was 1.6 per cent of overall expenditure in 2012 and 1.3 per cent in 2013.

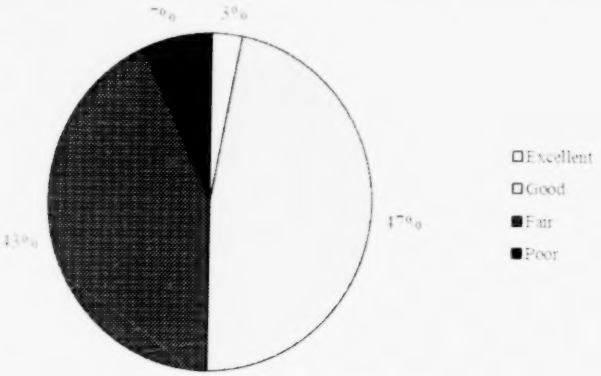
[14] See *Evaluation in Development Agencies, Better Aid*: series (Paris, OECD, 2010). Averages were based on central evaluation units of bilateral agencies for: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and United States of America; and administrative budgets of the African Development Bank, the Asian Development Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the Inter-American Development Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank Group.

that inadequacy of financial resources was one of the biggest obstacles that they faced, while 12 out of 27 identified insufficient human resources and 8 out of 27 reported a lack of evaluation expertise in their entity.

The evaluation culture overall within the Secretariat continues to be unsupportive

32. Evaluation culture within the Secretariat continues to be characterized by limited senior management support and staff buy-in. While six focal points volunteered their view in the survey that support for evaluation had improved, nine focal points, when asked in interviews what was most needed to strengthen evaluation, specified greater senior management and staff buy-in, a response similar to that in the 2010-2011 biennium. Some elaborated that evaluation still met with some resistance because management viewed it as having the potential to make the entity look bad, or as being an oversight burden and/or a compliance exercise. The level of support changed depending on the tone set by senior management. Evaluation focal points also mentioned that staff buy-in could improve through better incorporation of lessons learned and use of evaluation results. When asked in the survey to rate their entity's evaluation culture (i.e., senior management support and staff buy-in), 50 per cent of focal points gave a rating of fair or poor (see figure VII).

Figure VII
Ratings of the evaluation culture of 30 evaluation functions, 2012-2013



Source: OIOS survey. No focal points selected "very poor".

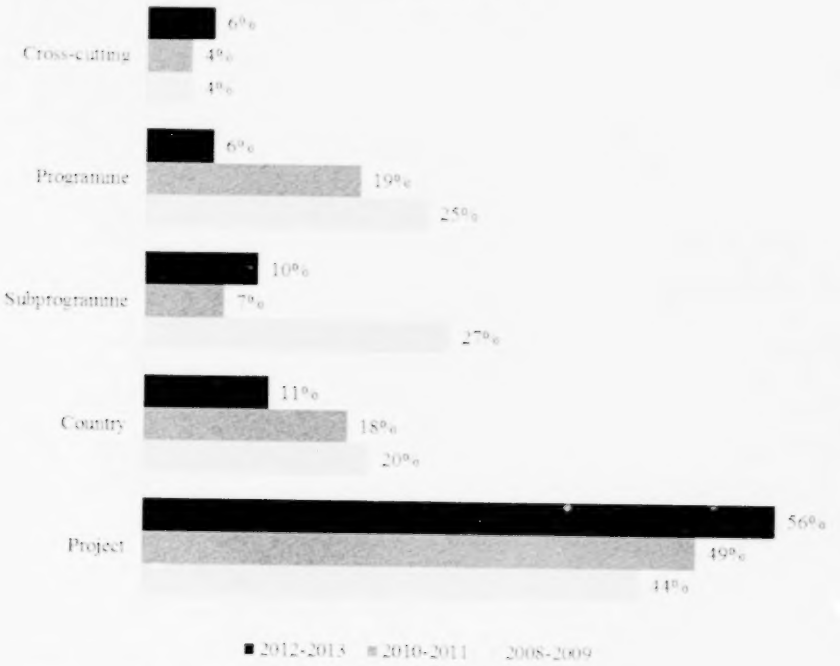
Gaps in evaluation remain across the Secretariat

33. With most evaluation in the Secretariat concentrated in a relatively few number of entities, gaps in evaluation coverage have remained within the Organization. In 2012-2013, although 25 entities submitted 298 evaluation reports, 4 entities (UNEP, UNHCR, UNODC and UN-Women) accounted for the majority (61 per cent) of all reports, and 2 (UNEP and UN-Women) accounted for 41 per cent of all reports. These four entities generally had greater field presence and more operational work which may have contributed to larger numbers of evaluations; nevertheless, large parts of the Organization were still not subject to evaluation. Additionally, gaps in evaluation coverage also remained across the Secretariat's strategic priority areas for the 2012-2013 biennium. Sixty-three per cent of sampled

reports addressed the Secretariat's work in the promotion of sustained economic growth and sustainable development and 23 per cent covered the development of Africa. Three reports addressed the promotion of justice and international law and two covered human rights. No reports covered disarmament.

34. Furthermore, figure VIII illustrates that the primary focus of evaluation continued to be at the project level, thus making it difficult to secure a broader picture of performance at the Organizational, programme and subprogramme levels. The scope of evaluation has been narrowing: 56 per cent of sampled reports focused on projects in 2012-2013, compared with 49 per cent in 2010-2011 and 44 per cent in 2008-2009. Programme-level evaluations decreased to 6 per cent from 19 per cent in 2010-2011 and 25 per cent in 2008-2009.

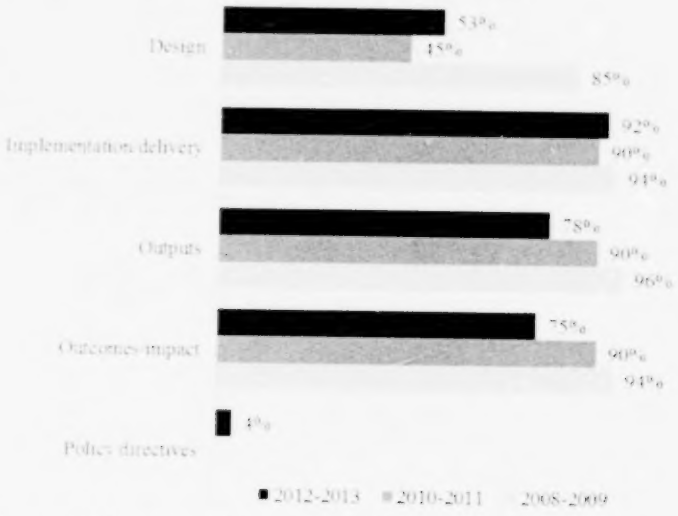
Figure VIII
Scope of sampled evaluation reports, 2008-2013



Source: OIOS assessment of sampled evaluation reports.

35. Additionally, figure IX demonstrates that the proportion of sampled reports focusing on implementation or delivery of work remained steady at 92 per cent in 2012-2013. Fewer reports focused on outcomes or impact, the proportion having decreased from 90 per cent in 2010-2011 to 75 per cent in 2012-2013.

Figure IX
Focus of sampled evaluation reports, 2008-2013



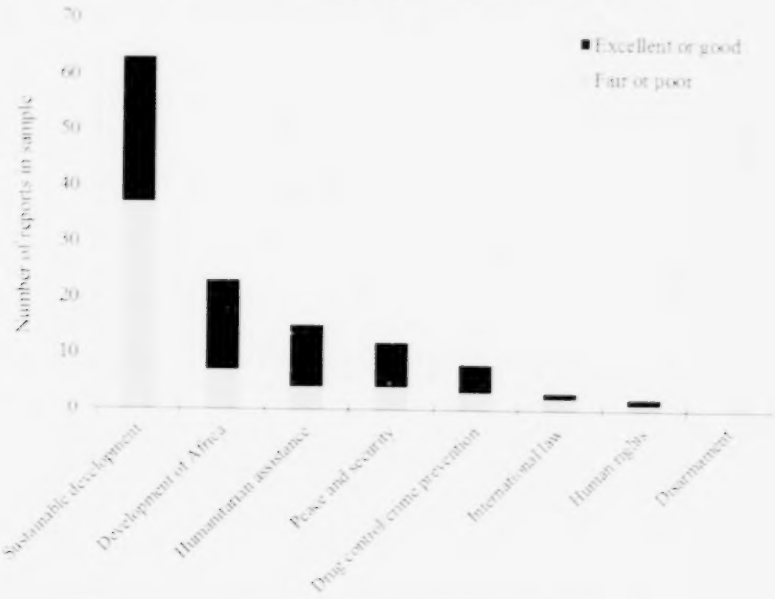
Source: OIOS assessment of sampled evaluation reports.

IV. Selected results from sampled high-quality evaluation reports

36. To synthesize the cross-cutting results from evaluation reports finalized in 2012-2013, OIOS analysed the contents of the 51 out of 102 sampled reports that received good or excellent ratings for the overall quality of their results section and categorized them by the Secretariat's relevant strategic priority areas for the biennium.[15] Figure X below compares the number of reports that received positive ratings for the overall quality of their results section with the total number of reports in the sample.

[15] See General Assembly resolution 65/262.

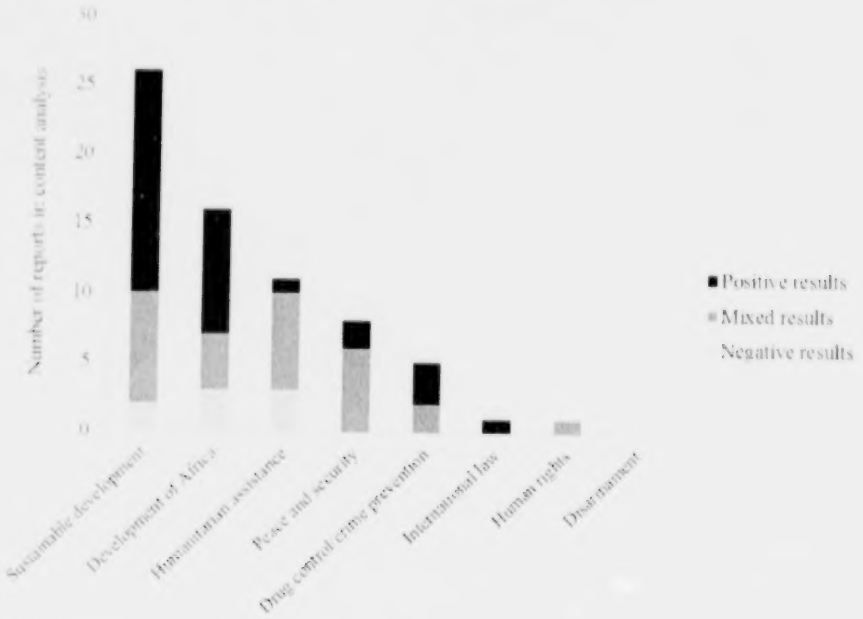
Figure X
Overall quality of results section by priority area, 2012-2013



Source: OIOS assessment of 102 sampled evaluation reports. There were no reports that received a "very poor" rating.

37. Some of the key themes from the 51 evaluation reports assessed as having good or excellent ratings for the overall quality of their results section are discussed below. Of these reports, just below half (24) presented mixed evaluation results, 22 presented largely positive results and 5 largely negative results. The results further broken down by priority area in figure XI. As 49 per cent of these reports evaluated projects, their applicability to overall performance is limited.

Figure XI
Type of evaluation results by priority area, 2012-2013



Source: OIOS assessment of results from 51 evaluation reports.

Promotion of sustained economic growth and sustainable development

38. In the area of promotion of sustained economic growth and sustainable development, 26 reports received good or excellent ratings for the overall quality of their results section. Of these, the majority (16) presented largely positive results. Key points included the following:

- The Organization effectively convened and facilitated meetings where Member States exchanged experiences and reached regional and subregional consensus on development issues.
- The Organization contributed to increased awareness and knowledge over a range of socioeconomic issues through the provision of knowledge products such as materials/publications, capacity-building projects and technical assistance.
- Projects were effective in increasing knowledge-sharing among statisticians from African national statistical offices and subregional organizations, and increasing the quality, timeliness, availability and regional relevance of statistics on internationally agreed upon development goals.
- The Cities and Climate Change Initiative established itself as a global leader on the issue by introducing the urban dimension into climate change agreements at global, regional, national and local levels.
- Interventions aimed at eliminating violence against women had greater impact when aligned with national and local strategies.

- Little documented evidence existed on the extent to which the Organization's outputs have contributed to development (e.g., in areas of subregional development goals, and climate change adaptation), thus making it difficult to verify the Organization's contribution.

- Gender and human rights concerns were not integrated into many of the projects.

Maintenance of international peace and security

39. In the area of maintenance of international peace and security, seven reports received good or excellent ratings for the overall quality of their results section. Of these, the majority (five) presented mixed results. Key points included the following:

- The Mission planning for the United Nations Support Mission in Libya was effective in strengthening the Organization's understanding of the country and building joint ownership across the system, resulting in a unified vision and approach.

- The United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti demonstrated resilience in providing logistical support and facilitating coordinated emergency relief immediately after the earthquake.

- While the Civilian Predeployment Training team was underutilized and attendance at trainings was relatively low, recipients of the Training initiatives provided positive feedback and the initiatives were important in preparing new field mission staff.

- In the area of integrated electoral assistance, there was need for further guidance and collective outreach and training on policy and practice, and improved coordination and implementation of the Organization's activities.

Development of Africa

40. In the area of development for Africa, 16 reports received good or excellent ratings for the overall quality of their results section. Of these, the majority (nine) presented largely positive results. Some of the key points emerging from these evaluations have been summarized under other priority areas. Additional key points included the following:

- Knowledge products contributed to increased awareness of and debates on regional integration, social policy and trade policy, and generated multi-stakeholder country-driven processes which helped build capacities and expand good governance, gender equality and equity.

- Capacity-building programmes on trade were relevant both for negotiating trade facilitation agreements and to the skills and business development needs of micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises by linking them to the supply chains of transnational companies.

Promotion of human rights

41. In the area of promotion of human rights, one report received a good or excellent rating for the overall quality of its results section. This evaluation on the support to the follow-up and implementation of recommendations made by treaty

bodies, special procedures and the universal periodic review presented largely mixed results. Key points included the following:

- Institutional shortcomings (including differing visions of the Organization's role, inadequacy in the quality of reporting, a cumbersome system for approving texts, and weak information and knowledge management) presented challenges to the Organization's ability to provide effective support.

Effective coordination of humanitarian assistance efforts

42. In the area of effective coordination of humanitarian assistance efforts, 11 reports received good or excellent ratings for the overall quality of their results section. Of these, the majority (seven) presented largely mixed results. Key points included:

- The Organization played a key coordinating role with respect to the humanitarian, civil and military actors by engaging with and building alliances among them.
- The Organization's response to the drought in the Horn of Africa brought mixed results: in some places, the initial response did not meet international standards and better coordination was required. Nevertheless, once emergency assistance was mobilized, provisions were distributed effectively to some communities.
- It was noted that the Organization's response to the influx of Somali refugee into Ethiopia brought mixed results, with the complex geopolitical environment and the magnitude of the refugee influx presenting challenges. Confusion centring around mandates and inadequate coordination mechanisms affected the response negatively.

Promotion of justice and international law

43. In the area of the promotion of justice and international law, one report received a good or excellent rating for the overall quality of its results section. This evaluation on the implementation of the West Africa Coast Initiative in Sierra Leone presented largely positive results. Key points included the following:

- Law enforcement agencies were able to build inter-agency cooperation through the West Africa Coast Initiative and Transnational Organized Crime Unit construct.
- There were difficulties in prosecuting transnational organized crime cases.
- Stakeholders expressed the desire for the Transnational Organized Crime Unit to become a formal subcommittee, with the status of the entity changing from administrative to legal, and its sustainability increasing thereby.

Disarmament

44. No evaluation reports in the area of disarmament were submitted, indicating that there is minimal evaluative evidence on how the Organization is performing in this priority area.

Drug control, crime prevention and combating international terrorism

45. In the area of drug control, crime prevention and combating international terrorism, five reports received good or excellent ratings for the overall quality of their results section. Of these, the majority (three) presented largely positive results. Key points emerging from these reports included the following:

- The Organization played an effective coordinating role in combating drug trafficking by involving national and international partners through inter-agency and inter-State cooperation agreements.
- The Paris Pact Initiative contributed to the countering of trafficking and consumption of opiates originating from Afghanistan by providing data, analyses and expertise.
- The Organization was relevant in helping a Member State reform and strengthen its penitentiary system in compliance with the United Nations standards on treatment of prisoners.
- While the provision of training to law enforcement officers on drug trafficking was considered relevant, the courses were offered only in one language, trainers had limited right of access, and lack of data hampered the assessment of the training's impact.

V. Evaluation workplan of the Office of Internal Oversight Services

46. In 2014-2015, the Inspection and Evaluation Division will have completed evaluations for the following entities:

- Department of Peacekeeping Operations/Department of Field Support (Headquarters)
- Department of Safety and Security
- ECA
- ECLAC
- ESCAP
- International Trade Centre
- United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)
- UNCTAD
- UNHCR
- UN-Women

47. The following thematic evaluation will have been completed in 2014-2015:

- Monitoring and evaluation of the Millennium Development Goals: lessons learned

48. In peacekeeping evaluation, the following evaluations will have been completed during 1 July 2014-30 June 2015:

- United Nations protection of civilians in peacekeeping
- Standing police capacity
- Protection from sexual exploitation and abuse in peacekeeping
- Results of national police capacity-building
- Integration between peacekeeping operations and United Nations country teams
- Department of Peacekeeping Operations senior leadership training

49. For the 2016-2017 biennium, the Inspection and Evaluation Division further refined its risk-based work-planning approach, which was founded on the most recently available information from: (a) the Secretariat-wide risk assessment exercise of the OIOS Internal Audit Division, completed in 2014; (b) the assessments of Secretariat entities' monitoring and evaluation capacity, completed in 2013; and (c) the Secretariat Risk Register.

50. Based on this risk assessment, the Inspection and Evaluation Division identified the following Secretariat entities for evaluations to be completed in 2016-2017:

- Department of Political Affairs
- ECE
- ESCWA
- Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
- Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
- UNHCR
- UNRWA
- Substantive support and programme components of the executive direction and management components of the programme budget section on "Overall policy-making, direction and coordination": the Executive Office of the Secretary-General, and the Offices of the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict on Sexual Violence in Conflict, and on Violence against Children

51. With regard to UNHCR, based on the risk information available and consideration of the Office's size, scope of work and complexity of operations, OIOS has identified UNHCR to be at high risk in terms of results and mandate achievement, thereby warranting more regular and annual independent evaluation.

52. The following thematic evaluation has been identified for completion in 2016-2017:

- Work of the regional commissions (ECA, ECE, ECLAC, ESCAP and ESCWA) based on the completed evaluations of each entity from 2015 to 2017

53. Tentatively planned evaluations in peacekeeping during 1 July 2015-30 June 2016 include:

- Force generation
- Robust peacekeeping
- "Rehatting" in peacekeeping missions

54. The Committee for Programme and Coordination may wish to consider which evaluations from the 2016-2017 workplan it would like to review at its fifty-seventh session in 2017, as well as request OIOS to undertake any additional evaluations not included in its current workplan.

VI. Follow-up on the recommended actions of the Committee for Programme and Coordination

55. In its consideration of the previous biennial report (A/68/70), the Committee for Programme and Coordination recommended that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to:[16]

- Take further, concrete measures to develop capacity for evaluation within the Secretariat programmes, with support provided by OIOS and external oversight bodies in terms of guidance and methodological advice (A/68/16, para. 153).
- Continue to make better use of in-house expertise, including, where possible, expertise available within OIOS, to carry out evaluations in the different entities of the Secretariat, taking advantage of the experience acquired by the internal and external oversight bodies, and to ensure that all efforts are made to avoid duplication and/or overlapping of evaluation functions in the Secretariat (A/68/16, para. 154).
- Ensure that senior managers' compacts present adequate programme objectives and performance measures in order to fulfil given mandates in accordance with relevant rules and regulations, and that the evaluation function receives due consideration in the performance appraisal of the senior managers (A/68/16, para. 155).
- Take concrete measures at the appropriate levels to ensure that the existing significant gaps in evaluation coverage and the lack of evaluative evidence on performance are addressed (A/68/16, para. 156).
- Entrust OIOS with harmonizing, to the extent possible, a format for its evaluation reports, including findings, conclusions and recommendations (A/68/16, para. 157).

56. OIOS has undertaken several initiatives to address these recommendations. Regarding the recommendations contained in paragraphs 153 and 154 of the report of the Committee for Programme and Coordination on its fifty-third session, OIOS has supported capacity development for evaluation within Secretariat entities through: a knowledge-sharing series on evaluation-related topics (e.g., on peacekeeping evaluation and evaluation at the World Bank); evaluation skills training sessions (e.g., on policy evaluation and case-study methods); and consultations and advice on issues related to strengthening evaluation (e.g., the development and revision of evaluation policies, which contributed to an increase in policies in 2012-2013).

57. Furthermore, in December 2013, OIOS released the first "evaluation scorecards", which provided an assessment of each Secretariat entity's evaluation practice and capacity in 2010-2011, using a common set of indicators and benchmarks for performance. These scorecards provided an overall snapshot of

[16] The General Assembly endorsed these recommendations in its resolution 68/20.

strengths and gaps in evaluation coverage, and some entities have reported using them to determine strategies for improving their evaluation functions.

58. Regarding the recommendations in paragraphs 153 and 154 of the report of the Committee for Programme and Coordination on external oversight bodies, in 2015, the Joint Inspection Unit completed an analysis of the evaluation function in the United Nations system whose purpose is to help strengthen the capacity of the evaluation function to meet professional standards and address emerging and global challenges across the United Nations system.[17] OIOS shares workplans and holds bimonthly meetings with the Board of Auditors and ad hoc meetings with the Joint Inspection Unit to discuss issues of mutual interest and holds an annual tripartite meeting to address oversight and coordination.

59. Regarding the recommendation in paragraph 155 of the report of the Committee for Programme and Coordination, OIOS monitors the implementation of recommendations from its evaluations and provides related performance results during the compact assessment. Also, the Secretary-General introduced two changes to the compacts, which encompassed: (a) streamlining them to make them more strategic by focusing on the top five programmatic priorities of each senior manager and the transformational management reform projects, in addition to objectives mandated by Member States and (b) having the Management Performance Board review the compacts and programme performance reports simultaneously. The reports submitted to the Board include a section on challenges and lessons learned, including lessons learned from evaluation.

60. Regarding the recommendation in paragraph 156 of the report of the Committee for Programme and Coordination, further to the activities described above, OIOS shared with Secretariat entities the revised and updated Inspection and Evaluation Division manual, which includes additional guidance on strengthening methods and approaches to assessing performance.

61. To respond to the recommendation in paragraph 157 of the report of the Committee for Programme and Coordination, OIOS developed guidelines and templates for its evaluation reports in the revised evaluation manual, and ensured consistency in respect of the format of its evaluation reports.

VII. Conclusion

62. A robust evaluation function continues to be a critical tool for assessing the Organization's performance, through which accountability can be enhanced and lessons can be learned to achieve stronger results. Yet, in the report on its fifty-third session, the Committee for Programme and Coordination "expressed its concern that, despite OIOS actions and initiatives ... the goal of ensuring the application of evaluation findings on programme design, delivery and policy directives in the Organization was far from being reached, and that the overall capacity for evaluation remained inadequate".[18] While the improvements noted in the present report are encouraging, more needs to be accomplished in order for evaluation to reach its full potential as an instrument for reflection and action. This entails, inter alia, a more robust culture for evaluation including senior management support and

[17] JIU/REP/2014/6.

[18] See A/68/16, para. 148.

staff buy-in, enhanced capacity including stronger staff competencies and increased resources, and better-quality evaluation reports. Improvement is also needed with respect to a greater mainstreaming of human rights and gender considerations into evaluation.

63. Not all Secretariat entities require the same kind of evaluation. Evaluation could also be better tailored to the needs of Secretariat entities in order to ensure better coordination and avoidance of duplication among oversight functions. Those entities that provide management, administration or other services to support substantive programme delivery and/or entities with limited mandates may be better served by developing programme impact pathways and conducting performance audits on a regular cycle. Programme impact pathways would provide a visual road map which could convey what an entity aims to achieve and how it will achieve its aims; they would also present a framework for determining the level of programme implementation at which to focus evaluations, inspections and performance audits. This shift would enable all Secretariat entities to assess their performance more regularly so as to improve their results.

64. The General Assembly, in its resolution 69/237, expressed its cognizance of the fact that the United Nations Evaluation Group and relevant partners had designated 2015 as the International Year of Evaluation. This provides an opportune time for taking steps to enhance evaluation so that it is fully utilized to support evidence-based decision-making in respect of how the United Nations works, its achievements and areas for improvement. In order for this to occur, the gaps identified in this report (namely, insufficient resources for evaluation, inadequate staff competencies, and limited buy-in from senior management and staff) must be closed. It is with these gaps in mind that OIOS makes the following three important recommendations for strengthening evaluation in the Secretariat.

VIII. Recommendations

Recommendation 1 (see sect. III, result A):

65. **Entities that do not currently have an evaluation policy (the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management, the Department of Public Information, the Department of Safety and Security, the Office of Legal Affairs, the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, the United Nations Office at Geneva, the United Nations Office at Nairobi and the United Nations Office at Vienna) should develop one.** They should cover the key components of a good policy, as described in the United Nations Evaluation Group norms and standards for evaluation policies, including the overall purpose and role of evaluation in the entity, by whom and how evaluation will be conducted, and evaluation planning and follow-up.

Indicator of achievement: Evaluation policy adopted

Recommendation 2 (see sect. III, results A and B):

66. **In order to strengthen their overall evaluation capacity, all entities should ensure that each of the following procedures is in place**:

- Developing an evaluation workplan

- Developing action plans for implementing evaluation recommendations
- Tracking and/or monitoring the implementation of evaluation recommendations
- Sharing and/or disseminating evaluation reports
- Sharing and/or disseminating lessons learned from evaluation
- Feeding evaluation results back into programme planning and implementation

Indicator of achievement: Applicable procedures in place and in use

Recommendation 3 (see sect. III, result C):

67. **The Department of Management, in consultation with OIOS, should improve the existing guidelines for planning and formulating the estimated resources (regular budget and extrabudgetary) for monitoring and evaluation activities in the programme budgets.** The revised guidelines should be provided to all Secretariat entities in time for consideration in formulating the 2018-2019 budget.

Indicator of achievement: Secretariat evaluation focal points assess revised guidelines for their clarity, and the reported resources are independently assessed to enable a more accurate reflection of monitoring and evaluation.

(*Signed*) Carman L. **Lapointe**
Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services
March 2015

Annex I

List of entities included in the report

1. Department of Economic and Social Affairs
2. Department of Field Support
3. Department for General Assembly and Conference Management
4. Department of Management
5. Department of Peacekeeping Operations
6. Department of Political Affairs
7. Department of Public Information
8. Department of Safety and Security
9. Economic Commission for Africa
10. Economic Commission for Europe
11. Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
12. Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
13. Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
14. International Trade Centre
15. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
16. Office for Disarmament Affairs
17. Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States
18. Office of Internal Oversight Services
19. Office of Legal Affairs
20. Office of the Special Adviser on Africa
21. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
22. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
23. United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
24. United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
25. United Nations Environment Programme
26. United Nations Human Settlements Programme
27. United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
28. United Nations Office at Geneva
29. United Nations Office at Nairobi
30. United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs
31. United Nations Office at Vienna
32. United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

Annex II

Methodology for the review of evaluation reports

1. In identifying evaluation reports, the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) requested all focal points to submit reports finalized in 2012 or 2013. OIOS received 379 documents, representing 26 Secretariat entities. The following did not submit reports: Office for Disarmament Affairs, Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, Office of Legal Affairs, United Nations Office at Geneva, United Nations Office at Nairobi and United Nations Office at Vienna.

2. OIOS reviewed the 379 documents to verify that they met the basic requirements of the Office in respect of evaluation reports. In total, 298 were screened as evaluation reports, which represented 25 entities. The Department of Safety and Security submitted one that was not considered to be an evaluation.

3. From among the 298 evaluation reports, a modified random sampling of 102 reports was conducted for further assessment (see table below).

Sampling methodology

Number of reports by entity	*Percentage of reports included in sample*
1 report	100
2-5 reports	75
6-15 reports	50
16 reports and over	20

4. All 102 reports in the sample were assessed to determine their quality, focus and scope. A total of 29 standards were used in the quality assessment. Several sections/aspects of the reports were assessed to ascertain quality, including the executive summary, introduction, methodology, background, results, conclusions, and recommendations and the format. In determining the overall rating, the results section was given double weight. In order to ensure that the quality assessment was as impartial as possible, OIOS contracted an independent evaluation expert for its conduct.

5. In addition, the 51 reports that received good or excellent ratings for the overall quality of their results section were categorized under the relevant strategic priority areas of the Organization and assessed to determine key results (see resolution 65/262).

Annex III

Comments received from Secretariat entities on the draft report[a]

Department for General Assembly and Conference Management

Thank you for your memorandum dated 11 February 2015 sharing the draft report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) on strengthening the role of evaluation and the application of evaluation findings on programme design, delivery and policy directives. We appreciate the opportunity to provide comments.

In table 1, included in paragraph 8 (p. 6) of the draft report, we note that the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management is listed under the column "Unit not dedicated to evaluation (includes other activities within a multifunctional division)". We respectfully disagree and strongly feel that the Department should be listed under the column "Dedicated evaluation unit within a multifunctional division" as we do have a dedicated unit.

In my memo of 5 November 2013 addressed to you on the final draft report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on Secretariat evaluation Scorecards (attached), I highlighted several key points. In response to the OIOS United Nations Secretariat evaluation scorecards 2010-2011, the Department established a unit in 2009 that carries out multiple functions, including evaluation. The functions include: (a) monitoring; (b) evaluation; (c) risk management; and (d) statistical verification. This unit, the Monitoring, Evaluation, Risk Management and Statistical Verification Unit, reports to the Director of the Central Planning and Coordination Division, Department for General Assembly and Conference Management. This falls under subprogramme 2, Planning and coordination of conference services, of section 2 of the proposed programme budget. Additionally monitoring and evaluation units were set up in our sister duty stations at Geneva and Vienna. Therefore, there does exist a mechanism in the Department dedicated to evaluation.

The Monitoring, Evaluation, Risk Management and Statistical Verification Unit prepares an annual report that is submitted to and considered at the Department management group. The central role of the Unit in programme performance reporting also gives it a chance to assess the programme delivery of the Department as a whole. In addition, it manages a global eSurvey and is responsible for summarizing the evaluations by Member States of the Department's performance. Furthermore, its activities are guided by the Department's strategic operational and policy needs throughout the year.

Since 2014, the Department has been a member of the United Nations Evaluation Group. The Department is making all necessary efforts to ensure its compliance with the standards set by the Group. The Department seeks further guidance and clarification from the Group on the methodologies set for evaluation. In respect of internal controls set for monitoring and evaluation, and sufficient budget allocation for resources, these have already been in place since the establishment of the Monitoring, Evaluation, Risk Management and Statistical Verification Unit.

[a] In the present annex, the Office of Internal Oversight Services provides the full text of comments received from Secretariat entities. This practice has been instituted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 64/263, following the recommendation of the Independent Audit Advisory Committee.

In paragraph 65 (p. 26), the Department is listed as one of the offices that does not currently have an evaluation policy. We agree with this recommendation since the Department's evaluation policy has yet to be articulated in a standard policy statement. In 2015, the Department will seek OIOS guidance to complete this exercise. I look forward to the collaboration of our two offices in this regard.

Department of Economic and Social Affairs

The report admits that improvements from the previous biennium did not translate into a higher quality of evaluation reports and that "gaps identified in the prior biennium remained in this one, including insufficient resources".

In the case of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, unless the gaps related to insufficient resources are fully addressed, the role of evaluation on programme design, delivery and policy directives will remain less than optimal. The three recommendations contained in the OIOS report are themselves subject to these prevailing gaps, so the conditions for their full implementation are not present. It is unclear how insufficient resources will translate into developing and implementing evaluation action plans, implementing evaluation recommendations and tracking and reporting evaluation resources. These evaluation activities may not be delivered fully under these conditions and in the current environment of budget austerity. Consideration should be given to preparing a Secretariat-wide workplan, along with the necessary resources for its implementation, for deliberation by Member States.

Department of Management

The Department of Management shared its comments on the OIOS recommendations contained in its informal report and wishes to reiterate points that were not reflected in the final draft report.

- Recommendation 1 calls for "entities that do not currently have an evaluation policy (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management, Department of Public Information, Department of Safety and Security, Office of Legal Affairs, Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, United Nations Office at Geneva, United Nations Office at Nairobi and United Nations Office at Vienna)" to "develop one". The Department of Management developed an evaluation policy in 2013 to comply with this requirement. We are concerned, however, that this recommendation goes beyond the norms and standards of the United Nations Evaluation Group, which stipulates for "each organization" to have a policy and not every department in the organization. Preparation of evaluation policies by every department and office of the Secretariat would seem to represent a duplication of efforts. OIOS could assist the Organization in developing one Secretariat-wide evaluation policy, taking into account management views and the resources available for this purpose.

- Recommendation 2 calls for "developing an evaluation workplan" by all entities. The current budget preparation procedure provides for a mechanism that requires departments and offices to plan their main evaluation activities for the biennium within Form 12, which was requested by the Advisory

Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions[b] and endorsed by the General Assembly. It may be advisable for OIOS to coordinate with the Department of Management/Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts prior to requesting any additional workplan in order to avoid duplications. Other procedures identified in recommendation 2 are currently applied to the evaluation activities of the Department of Management as described in the Department's evaluation policy.

- Recommendation 3 calls for the Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts "to ensure that all Secretariat entities consistently and accurately plan and report on evaluation and monitoring resources separately". This recommendation is within the purview of the Office.

In addition, the premise of recommendation 2, as described in the report, is to strengthen the overall evaluation capacity of Secretariat entities. As most of the departments and offices of the Secretariat have neither evaluation functions nor a dedicated unit to conduct and follow up on internal evaluations, it would be appropriate to make a recommendation in regard to the methodological and training support that would be required from OIOS[c] to achieve this goal.

Department of Peacekeeping Operations and Department of Field Support

In reference to the OIOS memorandum (IED-15-0024) on the above topic, I am pleased to inform you that the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support have already implemented recommendations 1 and 2. The Departments first developed evaluation policies for Headquarters and the field missions in 2008. These evaluation policies have twice been reviewed in April 2010 and January 2013 and will be subject to periodic reviews in the future (in accordance with recommendation 1). Recommendation 2, which calls on entities to establish certain procedures — including developing an evaluation workplan, developing action plans for implementing evaluation recommendations and tracking and/or monitoring the implementation of recommendations — has already been applied by the Departments. Copies of the evaluation policies were submitted to OIOS.

Recommendation 3 calls on the Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts of the Department of Management to establish standards and provide guidelines to all Secretariat entities for planning and reporting on evaluation resources. Since the Office is the lead entity on the implementation of this recommendation, we trust that the Department of Management will provide comments.

[b] The following are excerpts from the reports of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions related to the mandates that led to the preparation of Form 12: "that in the future the budget submissions will include information on the effectiveness of the Organization's investment in monitoring and evaluation" (A/60/7, endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 60/255), "should make clear how the outcome of evaluations leads to improvements in mandate delivery budgets (A/64/7, endorsed by the Assembly in resolution 64/245) and should "provide information on the main evaluation activities planned by each department or office" (A/66/7, endorsed by the Assembly in resolution 66/263).

[c] OIOS responsibility to provide guidance on evaluation to all Secretariat departments is highlighted in the report of the Secretary-General (A/60/883/Add.2, pp. 114-116). The report was considered by the Advisory Committee (see A/61/605) and further endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 61/245.

Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

Overall, we welcome the conclusions and recommendations of the OIOS biennial report and are pleased with the manner in which the final report reflected the comments we made on the draft report, in particular the inclusion of what now becomes recommendation 3.

Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

Reference is made to the inter-office memorandum dated 11 February (IED-15-00240) in which you shared with us the draft report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on strengthening the role of evaluation and the application of evaluation findings on programme design, delivery and policy directives.

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) has no formal comments on this latest draft and has accepted all relevant recommendations. Please find attached a copy of the recommendation action plan that includes the ESCWA management response and progress to date against the relevant recommendations.

Should you have any questions on the recommendation action plan, please feel free to contact the Chief of the Strategy, Evaluation and Partnership Section at ESCWA, Ms. Ramla Khalidi.

I take this opportunity to thank you and the staff at the OIOS Inspection and Evaluation Division for your continued support and cooperation.

Executive Office of the Secretary-General

This is in reference to your note of 12 February 2015, in which you requested comments on the draft biennial report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services entitled "Strengthening the role of evaluation and the application of evaluation findings on programme design, delivery and policy directives". This note also responds to your note of 3 December 2014 on the implementation status of the recommendations contained in the previous OIOS biennial report. In particular, this is in reference to the query on actions that might have been undertaken by the Executive Office of the Secretary-General to address the recommendations raised by the Committee for Programme and Coordination at its fifty-third session.

I note that the Executive Office of the Secretary-General has been identified as one of the entities that will be evaluated by OIOS in the 2016-2017 biennium workplan under the context of evaluation capacity.

I understand that, as part of the 2012-2013 OIOS biennial study on strengthening the role of evaluation, your office worked closely with all Secretariat programmes to collect relevant information related to their evaluation activities. The Executive Office of the Secretary-General has nothing further to add to the results garnered through that Secretariat-wide exercise through which information was requested from and submitted by all programmes to OIOS.

With regard to the recommendation of the Committee for Programme and Coordination contained in paragraph 155 regarding the senior manager compacts

and related performance appraisals, the Secretary-General has continuously worked to improve the effectiveness of the compacts and assessments. While the compacts have always cross-referenced the relevant budget documents, in terms of the programme objectives and performance measures required to fulfil the mandates and also require compliance with regulations and rules, the following two important changes have been introduced along the lines of the recommendations issued by the Committee:

- The compacts of 2013 were streamlined to make them more strategic by focusing on the top five programmatic priorities of each senior manager and the transformational management reform projects, in addition to the objectives established in the programme and planning documents of the Organization as mandated by Member States.

- Since 2011, the Management Performance Board has been reviewing the senior manager compacts and the programme performance reports simultaneously. In the version of these reports that are submitted to the Board as part of its assessment of senior manager performance, there is a section entitled "Challenges and lessons learned", where programme managers are expected to include what they have learned from their internal evaluation exercises.

As reflected in the draft report, there were some positive developments throughout the Secretariat in the biennium 2012-2013. Notwithstanding this, the Secretary-General remains committed to further strengthening evaluation throughout the Organization and, as such, in order to ensure that this issue receives the necessary senior management oversight and direction, it is being included as an item on the agenda of the Management Committee.

International Trade Centre

The International Trade Centre (ITC) endorses the findings presented in the (draft) report regarding the evaluation function conducted at United Nations Secretariat entities, including ITC, in the period 2012-2013 and shares a common understanding with the report on the role and future development of the evaluation function in the United Nations system. ITC found the analysis contained in report to be useful as well, particularly the analytical frames used in assessing evaluation processes and procedures, the high quality of the evaluation report, and the evaluation capacity and culture, which will serve as useful references for ITC to further enhance its evaluation function. ITC therefore congratulates OIOS on the quality and timeliness of the draft report.

ITC accepts the three recommendations provided in the (draft) report. In this respect, ITC is either already taking similar actions, as recommended in the (draft) report, within current strategic planning framework of ITC, or is planning to take actions to address the recommendations in 2015-2016.

In anticipating the next OIOS Inspection and Evaluation Division biennial report for the period 2013-2014, ITC expects that the evaluation work of ITC will contribute to the analysis and findings on two key thematic areas, including promotion of sustained economic growth and sustainable development, and

development of Africa, on which ITC trade development interventions have yielded concrete development results.

Besides, we provided two specific comments on the text of the report:

- Paragraph 5: The use of the term "independent evaluations", when they are undertaken by OIOS, next to "self-evaluations", when they are undertaken by the entities, infers that the independence and credibility of the evaluations undertaken by the entities is being questioned in the document, which is detrimental to the purpose of "strengthening the role of evaluation" in the United Nations. Therefore, we propose to replace the term "independent evaluations" by "centrally conducted evaluations", and "self-evaluations" by "entity-conducted evaluations".

- Paragraphs 32 to 35: In terms of the evaluation culture, the next biennial report should take into account the crucial areas related to improving the conditions for better "evaluability" at the up-stream of an intervention cycle, namely, the management function designs interventions for results and monitors progress. Based on ITC experiences, the key element to enhance an evaluation culture is that managers are better trained and understand evaluation data requirements and the methods used in evaluation so that they can plan and implement activities accordingly.

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

On behalf of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), this is to confirm that we endorse the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on strengthening the role of evaluation and the application of evaluation findings on programme design, delivery and policy directives.

Office of the Special Adviser on Africa

The Office of the Special Adviser on Africa received with appreciation the formal draft of the OIOS report on strengthening the role of evaluation and the application of evaluation findings on programme design, delivery and policy directives and would like to thank you for the continued consultative process followed by OIOS in the preparation of its report.

In the meantime, Office of the Special Adviser on Africa would like to highlight the fact that following its separation from the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States and the appointment of a new Under-Secretary-General as Special Adviser on Africa in May 2012, a comprehensive and inclusive self-evaluation of the activities was developed and conducted by the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa against both the strategic framework for the years 2012-2013 — drafted and approved before the appointment of the new Under-Secretary-General — and Secretary-General's Bulletin ST/SGB/2003/6, on the functions and responsibilities of Office. The main findings of the self-evaluation exercise indicated that a number of mandates had been added to Office by the General Assembly in consecutive resolutions, to be implemented "within existing resources", therefore,

creating a gap resulting from a lack of the financial and human resources necessary for the implementation, thus raising the need to strengthen the Office in order to effectively implement its mandates. The new identified major additional mandates for the Office are following:

- **Establishment and implementation of the United Nations monitoring mechanism to review commitments made by African countries and their development partners toward Africa's development**. Following deliberations at the 2008 high-level meeting on Africa's development needs, the General Assembly adopted resolution 63/1 on a political declaration on Africa's development needs and resolution 66/293. The Office was mandated to establish the monitoring mechanism, serve as the substantive secretariat and consult extensively with a wide spectrum of stakeholders, including African countries, traditional and emerging development partners, the private sector, academia, the media, foundations and civil society organizations, as well as with the United Nations system organizations, departments, funds and programmes in order to mobilize their contributions to the biennial review process. The Office was also mandated to submit to the Assembly a monitoring report on a biennium basis, and the first report (A/69/163) was submitted and reviewed by Member States during the Assembly debate October 2014 on Africa's development.

- **Strengthening of the interdepartmental task force on African affairs**. Pursuant to resolutions 67/293, 67/294 and 68/278, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to continue to take measures to strengthen the task force, including through enhancing joint advocacy for international support to Africa, assisting in the mobilization of support for the implementation of relevant programmes and initiatives on Africa and championing approaches and solutions that take into account the enabling environment that peace and security provide for development. In these resolutions, the Assembly also called upon the Office, through the task force, to ensure further coherence and an integrated approach for United Nations support to Africa. Furthermore, the members of the task force backstop the monitoring mechanism by providing contributions to the biennial review process.

- **Following up on the implementation of all global summits and conferences related to Africa**. In resolutions 67/293 and 67/294, the General Assembly also called upon the Office to follow up on the implementation of all global summit and conference outcomes related to Africa, including the implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 2012 (Rio+20). In these resolutions, the Assembly also called upon the Office to monitor the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda in Africa upon its adoption.

- **Promoting greater coherence in the work of the United Nations system in support of the New Partnership for Africa's Development through the Regional Coordination Mechanism**. In resolution 68/301, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to promote greater coherence in the work of the United Nations system in support of the New Partnership for Africa's Development, on the basis of the agreed clusters of the Regional

Coordination Mechanism for Africa. As a member and co-chair of the Advocacy and Communications Cluster of the Regional Coordination Mechanism, the Office further promotes coherence in the work of the United Nations system together with the Directorate of Information and Communication of the African Union Commission and other relevant United Nations entities.

The methodology for the comprehensive self-assessment exercise included a desk review and assessment of the above-mentioned documents and other related documentation, and consultation with Member States, the task force and United Nations entities with a field presence in Africa as well as consultations with the Controller, the Department of Management and the Executive Office of the Secretary-General. On the basis on these consultations, and taking the evaluation findings into account, in resolutions 67/293 and 67/294, as well as 68/278 and 68/301, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to take measures to strengthen the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa in order to enable it to effectively fulfil its mandate, including monitoring and reporting on progress related to meeting the special needs of Africa and coordinating the interdepartmental task force on African affairs, to ensure a coherent and integrated approach for United Nations support for Africa, including following up on the implementation of all global summit and conference outcomes related to Africa, including the implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development.

Subsequently, the issues identified were articulated by the Secretary-General in a separate report that laid out the results of the evaluation and was entitled "Strengthening the Office of Special Adviser on Africa" (A/68/506). The report was submitted to the General Assembly.

Against this backdrop and taking into account that an evaluation unit could not be established owing to the small size of the Office, the Office kindly requests that, on page 6 of the formal draft report of the Office of the Internal Oversight Services on strengthening the role of evaluation and the application of evaluation findings on programme design, delivery and policy direction, under table 1 (Secretariat structures of the evaluation functions by the end of 2013), the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa be placed under the category "No evaluation unit but evaluation activity".

In addition, and in response to paragraph 65 recommendation 1 suggesting that the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa should develop an evaluation policy, the Office has started developing an evaluation policy, and OIOS support in this regard would be much appreciated in order for the Office to swiftly implement the recommendation.

Thank you for your kind attention to this matter.

United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

Thank you for the draft report on strengthening the role of evaluation and the application of evaluation findings on programme design, delivery and policy directives.

I welcome this important initiative to promote learning and encourage improvement in evaluation, and reaffirm that strengthening evaluation capacity and promoting gender-responsive evaluation in the United Nations system are important priorities of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women).

UN-Women appreciates very much the information and analysis on gender equality provided in the report. However, as expressed in the previous comments of UN-Women (see A/68/70), the gender equality perspective could be further enhanced and synergies developed, by using the indicator on the integration of gender equality, into evaluation from the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in the analysis of the current report.

Based on findings in paragraph 24 stating that "incorporating gender and human rights issues remained a weak cross-cutting area" and that about " half of the 102 reports (52) considered gender issues in their results; and 19 reports considered them in their methodology" and on the conclusions in paragraph 62 indicating that "improvement is needed with regard to greater mainstreaming of human rights and gender considerations into evaluation", the report would benefit from a specific recommendation on how the departments and entities of the United Nations Secretariat could improve performance in this area.

UN-Women agrees with all three recommendations of the report. I am pleased to note that UN-Women has already implemented recommendations 1 and 2. UN-Women appreciates recommendation 3 on strengthening the planning and reporting on evaluation resources in the entities of the United Nations Secretariat.

I would like to note that, in the case of UN-Women, information on evaluation expenditure is provided in the annual report on evaluation function to the Executive Board (UNW/2014/3). In this regard, I would like to ask to for a correction to endnote 13 (para. 28), which states that UN-Women had zero resources allocated for evaluation. This statement is not factually correct as the UN-Women total expenditure in evaluation in 2012 was 1.6 per cent, and in 2013 was 1.3 per cent of overall UN-Women expenditure (see UNW/2014/3).

Thank you again for this important report on evaluations functions, and we look forward to the implementation of recommendations and next steps in strengthening evaluation in the Secretariat.

United Nations Environment Programme

The OIOS report on strengthening the role of evaluation and the application of evaluation findings on programme design, delivery and policy directives provides a useful general overview of the status and trends in evaluation work across the United Nations Secretariat entities.

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) welcomes the OIOS risk-based approach to its work planning. This should mean that Secretariat entities that have lower installed capacities for evaluation receive more in-depth attention from OIOS.

While aggregate data identifies some interesting general trends, it is less useful as feedback to individual Secretariat evaluation functions if they are to use such studies to improve themselves.

The findings in some cases come from survey data and in other cases from the OIOS evaluation scorecard assessments of Secretariat entities. Some of the general conclusions need to be regarded with caution as they are derived from assessment methods that have some flaws.

For example, there appears to be a problem with how evaluation policies were assessed and scored. The UNEP evaluation policy achieved a score of 1.9 (out of 2.0) in the OIOS "Scorecard" assessment that presumably underpins this analysis. A score of 2.0 is required for "high adherence". However, the range for " medium adherence" was from 1.9 to 0.1 and appears to encompass a very broad range of "adherence", from very good evaluation polices to very weak policies, with zero being "no policy available". How the method arrives at the score from the assessment of the policy against the parameters used in the OIOS evaluation scorecard study has not been specified. The method therefore lacks transparency and, moreover, the aspects of the policy that were not deemed compliant in the OIOS review have not specified. UNEP previously suggested that a broader range of scores say, 2.0-1.6, be used for "high adherence" and, given that some policy aspects are more important than others, suggested that a weighting system be adopted to reflect this in the assessment method.

Given these methodological problems, it is unsurprising that the average assessment of evaluation policies changed little as the mid-range score encompasses very strong to quite weak evaluation policies across the Secretariat.

The report highlights a finding that policies received generally lower ratings for: not identifying competencies for evaluators (with 12 policies not mentioning them at all) and not defining criteria for selecting evaluations. It is a matter of judgement as to which aspects of the United Nations Evaluation Group norms and standards need to be enshrined in a policy document as opposed to other documents that set out the operating procedures of the evaluation function. UNEP evaluators have published peer reviewed academic journal articles on the issue of evaluation selection and priority setting in the organization, yet we chose not to include the operational detail of evaluation selection and work planning in our policy. Similarly, the specific competencies of evaluators are specified in detailed job descriptions and in Evaluation Terms of Reference rather than in the policy.

Finally, while UNEP was deemed "not to have met all of the standards" used in the OIOS assessment of evaluation policies, the United Nations Evaluation Group professional peer review of the UNEP Evaluation Office (2012) assessed UNEP evaluation policy very positively: "The panel finds the evaluation policy to be well designed and appropriate". In addition, in the most recent Joint Inspection Unit study of the UNEP evaluation function (2014), the Unit assessed the evaluation policy in the highest category: The policy covers all United Nations Evaluation Group criteria as well as other good practices as identified by the Joint Inspection Unit. Triangulation is a key principle in reaching evaluative conclusions and we would encourage OIOS to consider referring to independent third party assessments of the evaluation functions of Secretariat entities where available in future studies.

The UNEP Evaluation Office thinks that the report quality assessment criteria are on the whole comprehensive and sound (although these are not mentioned in this report). However, we have previously observed that some of the criteria used are in some cases somewhat arbitrary and are not specifically driven by the United Nations Evaluation Group norms and standards.

The format of an evaluation report should be driven by its intended utility. For example, the OIOS "quality" criterion requiring the separation of findings from evaluative judgements does not make for easy reading and uptake of report findings by the intended users. Another issue relates to the specification of who should implement recommendations. It is not always the case that the evaluation team "knows best". It is acceptable for a recommendation to be made with options as to who might implement it. The follow-up phase to the evaluation, the preparation of the recommendation implementation plan, often being a more appropriate document to capture the final and agreed responsibility for recommendation implementation.

There are also very many criteria to assess report quality, it is unclear whether OIOS regards them all to be of equal significance or whether they are they weighted. In the UNEP internal assessment of evaluation report quality (we have systematic records of this for every report since 2006 to date and quality is independently benchmarked for Global Environment Facility (GEF)-funded evaluations against the World Bank and the United Nations Development Programme), we place the most emphasis on the evidence-based assessment of performance and on the internal consistency of the report.

In this OIOS study, and in contrast to assessments of the quality of UNEP evaluation reports in the United Nations Evaluation Group professional peer review, the most recent 2014 Joint Inspection Unit assessment and annual GEF Independent Evaluation Office assessments, UNEP is not placed in the highest category for evaluation report quality. We were, unable to discern (from the scorecard study that underpins these findings) which attributes of our reports would require, in OIOS opinion, further enhancement. If such detail were available we could compare it to our own internal systematic assessments of evaluation report quality, and put this feedback to good use.

The report concludes that with the following: "the primary focus of evaluation continued to be at the project level, thus making it difficult to have a broader picture of performance at the Organizational, programme and subprogramme levels. The limited scope of evaluation has been worsening: 56 per cent of the sampled reports focused on projects in 2012-2013, compared to 49 per cent in 2010-2011 and 44 per cent in 2008-2009."

Another perspective on this data is that, as an evaluation culture in the Secretariat develops, it is likely to begin with an increase in the numbers of evaluations done — but initially these are likely to be at the project level. As evaluation functions mature, their emphasis is likely to shift towards more strategic higher level evaluations. The conclusion that "the scope of evaluation is worsening" may prove unfounded.

Our experience in undertaking evaluations at the programme, subprogramme or Organizational levels shows that higher level performance is often difficult to assess without a sound basis of evaluative evidence to draw from; project evaluations provide this basis. Additionally, simply counting the number of evaluations at higher

levels is not always a good indicator. A very well done strategic evaluation may have long-lasting utility — simply counting the number of reports in a biennium would not account for this. For example, UNEP conducted a formative evaluation of the UNEP programme of work in 2011 — yet the study continues to influence senior management and governing body deliberations to this day with recommendations and lessons from the 2011 study shaping development of the 2018-2021 medium-term strategy.

Finally, paragraph 57 claims that the "scorecards provided an overall snapshot of strengths and gaps in evaluation coverage within the Secretariat, and entities have used them to determine strategies for where and how to improve their evaluation functions." UNEP supports the first point but observes, with respect to the second, that the scorecard method did not disclose the detail of how each parameter was assessed, limiting an evaluation function's ability to determine what specifically would need to be improved for a higher assessed performance.

United Nations Human Settlements Programme

Thank you for your letter dated 11 February 2015 (IED-15-0024) and for sharing with us the draft report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) on strengthening the role of evaluation and the application of evaluation findings on programme design, delivery and policy directives.

The report provides useful insight into the evolution and practice of the evaluation functions in United Nations agencies. I am pleased to find that there were some positive developments in 2012-2013 regarding the Secretariat's evaluation functions and that progress made in the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) to strengthen the evaluation function is acknowledged. As you will be aware, during the 2012-2013 biennium, I established an independent Evaluation Unit and approved the UN-Habitat evaluation policy.

Moving forward, the UN-Habitat focus is to continue to deepen the institutionalization of the requirements of the evaluation policy to ensure that the evaluation coverage and evaluation use are improved throughout the agency. I believe this is in line with the recent OIOS evaluation of UN-Habitat, which concluded that there was evaluative evidence that UN-Habitat had been effective in delivering its targeted outputs, but investments in outcome evaluations were found to be inadequate.

In the 2015 International Year of Evaluation, I hope this report will further help bring to the attention of Member States the importance of the evaluation function and the challenges that we are facing in building and strengthening a culture of evaluation. Given the financial constraints that many agencies are currently facing, including UN-Habitat, we need to find more ways to better support the strengthening of the evaluation function and allocation of resources in order to respond to demands for evidence of results and effective delivery.

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) welcomes the OIOS biannual report on strengthening the role of evaluation and the application of

evaluation findings on programme design, delivery and policy directives as the report offers an OIOS perspective on a fast-evolving subject, which increasingly gains in importance and recognition: evaluation. UNODC has contributed throughout the process of this evaluation and takes all final recommendations into full consideration. As often is the case with high-level exercises, specific and concrete aspects of the subject under consideration may be hidden or lost. In particular, UNODC points out that the report unfortunately represents an average picture only, not doing full justice to the very uneven developments within specific agencies with regard to their evaluation function. Therefore, UNODC kindly requests OIOS to reconsider its methodology so that the unevenness and variety of evaluation experiences within different programmes be fully captured, rather than representing an overall view, which does not do justice to the differences. It is therefore noteworthy to state that there is actually no "Secretariat's evaluation function", but rather distinct evaluation functions, corresponding to each programme, with very different and distinct independent evaluation outfits.

UNODC welcomes the statement made in the report that "resources to evaluation remain insufficient" and would be delighted to see OIOS develop a formula as to how sufficient resources should be established.

Furthermore, the report mostly examines a limited sample of evaluation reports. This sample is not fully representative, nor can a deduction be made from this small sample as to whether or not an evaluation culture exists within a specific programme. UNODC has delivered specific ideas on how to improve the methodology and looks forward to a continued, constructive dialogue with OIOS.

In addition to the above, UNODC is pleased to see that its evaluation activities have been rated very positively and assures OIOS that continued efforts will be made to further strengthen the UNODC evaluation culture.

United Nations A/70/73

General Assembly

Distr.: General
27 March 2015
English
Original: English/Spanish

Seventieth session
Item 63 of the preliminary list*
Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report is submitted pursuant to the request of the General Assembly that the Secretary-General report at the seventieth session on the implementation of resolution 65/119 on the Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism. The Secretary-General points out that attention should be focused on accomplishing concrete results with the involvement of the Special Committee, the administering Powers and the Non-Self-Governing Territories. The eradication of colonialism, in keeping with the principles of the Charter and relevant resolutions of the United Nations, is a common endeavour that requires the constructive engagement of all concerned.

The General Assembly has repeatedly called for speeding up the process of decolonization. The midpoint of the Third Decade provides a framework for taking stock of where we stand and what needs to be done to achieve the objectives of the plan of action.

* A/70/50.

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I. Introduction

1. On 10 December 2010, at the conclusion of the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, the General Assembly adopted resolution 65/119, entitled "Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism", which, inter alia, declared the period 2011-2020 the Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism and called upon Member States to intensify their efforts to continue to implement the plan of action for the Second Decade (A/56/61, annex). The Assembly called upon the administering Powers to cooperate fully with the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples to develop a constructive programme of work on a case-by-case basis for the Non-Self-Governing Territories to facilitate the implementation of the mandate of the Special Committee and the relevant resolutions of the United Nations on decolonization.

2. Pursuant to the provisions contained in resolution 65/119 and the plan of action, the Secretary-General submits the present report on action taken to implement the mentioned resolution.

3. The plan of action contains recommendations directed to the international community, the administering Powers, the specialized agencies, programmes and intergovernmental bodies, in particular the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples.

II. Actions taken during the Decade by United Nations organs

A. General Assembly

4. During the period under review, the General Assembly has annually considered directly in plenary meetings or in the Fourth Committee a number of questions relating to decolonization and has adopted resolutions and decisions on them. The Assembly has considered the following items:

(a) Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. Under this item, the Assembly considers the report of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration. The Committee monitors developments in all Non-Self-Governing Territories and reports on them to the Assembly, making recommendations on each Territory — American Samoa, Anguilla, Bermuda, the British Virgin Islands, the Cayman Islands, French Polynesia (since 2013), Gibraltar, Guam, Montserrat, New Caledonia, Pitcairn, St. Helena, Tokelau, the Turks and Caicos Islands, the United States Virgin Islands and Western Sahara — as well as on the issue of the dissemination of information on decolonization;

(b) The question of the Falkland Islands (Malvinas);[1]

[1] In accordance with paragraph 4 (b) of the annex to resolution 58/316, this item remains on the agenda for consideration upon notification by a Member State.

(c) Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories transmitted under Article 73 e of the Charter of the United Nations;

(d) Economic and other activities that affect the interests of the peoples of Non-Self-Governing Territories;

(e) Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and international institutions associated with the United Nations;

(f) Offers by Member States of study and training facilities for inhabitants of Non-Self-Governing Territories.

5. During the period under review, the General Assembly has continued to issue directives to the Special Committee regarding its mandate. In particular, the Assembly, by its resolutions 66/91, 67/134, 68/97 and 69/107, has called on the Special Committee and the administering Powers to cooperate in preparing plans for the decolonization of specific Territories and to promote the implementation of the plan of action for the eradication of colonialism. Most recently, by its resolution 69/107, the Assembly requested the Special Committee to continue to seek suitable means for the immediate and full implementation of the Declaration and to carry out the actions approved by the General Assembly regarding the Second and Third International Decades for the Eradication of Colonialism in all Territories that have not yet exercised their right to self-determination, including independence. The Assembly requested the Special Committee in particular to, inter alia, formulate specific proposals to bring about an end to colonialism; to continue to examine the political, economic and social situation in the Non-Self-Governing Territories and to recommend, as appropriate, to the Assembly the most suitable steps to be taken to enable the populations of those Territories to exercise their right to self-determination, including independence, in accordance with the relevant resolutions on decolonization, including resolutions on specific Territories; and to continue to dispatch visiting and special missions to the Non-Self-Governing Territories in accordance with the relevant resolutions on decolonization.

6. At its sixty-seventh session, the General Assembly by it resolution 67/265, affirmed the inalienable right of the people of French Polynesia to self-determination and independence, in accordance with Chapter XI of the Charter of the United Nations and General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV), and recognized that French Polynesia remained a Non-Self-Governing Territory within the meaning of the Charter. It declared that an obligation existed under Article 73 e of the Charter on the part of the Government of France, as the administering Power of the Territory, to transmit information on French Polynesia.

7. At its sixty-ninth session, the General Assembly, by its resolution 69/107, requested the Secretary-General, President pro tempore of the Special Committee, to meet informally at least once a year with the Chair and the Bureau of the Committee during the intersessional period, in order to explore innovative ways of using his good offices to help to advance the decolonization agenda on a case-by-case basis.

Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

8. As the policymaking organ of the General Assembly on decolonization, the Special Committee has been at the forefront of United Nations efforts to implement the plan of action for the Decade. Information on its activities may be found in the annual report of the Special Committee to the General Assembly. In 2014, the Special Committee Bureau was expanded with the addition of a third Vice-Chair (Indonesia).

9. As requested by the General Assembly, the Special Committee has carried out periodic reviews of the situation in each Territory, analysing progress made in the implementation of the Declaration. Such analysis has been based on information provided by the administering Powers pursuant to Article 73 e of the Charter of the United Nations and the annual working papers prepared by the Secretariat, as well as information provided by the representatives of the Non-Self-Governing Territories at hearings and regional seminars held by the Committee. On the basis of such analysis, the Special Committee has formulated recommendations to the General Assembly.

10. The Special Committee took decisions to continue to consider the question of Puerto Rico on the basis of reports prepared by the Rapporteur of the Special Committee and heard petitioners on that subject. During the period under review, the Special Committee adopted annual resolutions on the question without a vote.

11. In accordance with the plan of action, the Special Committee has continued to hold annual regional seminars in the Caribbean and Pacific regions alternately. The seminars have included the participation of the representatives of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories, the administering Powers, Member States, regional organizations, two specialized agencies, non-governmental organizations and experts. Four regional seminars have been held to date: Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (2011), Ecuador (2012 and 2013) and Fiji (2014). Throughout the period under review, the regional seminars have served as an effective forum for discussion of issues of concern to the Non-Self-Governing Territories and have afforded the representatives of the Non-Self-Governing Territories opportunities to present their views and recommendations to the Special Committee. The Special Committee includes its reports on the seminars to the General Assembly in its annual report on its work.

12. Pursuant to the plan of action, the Special Committee has continued to seek the full cooperation of the administering Powers with regard to the dispatch of visiting missions to the Territories. In 2014, the Special Committee dispatched a visiting mission to New Caledonia with the cooperation and assistance of the administering Power, with the objective of gathering first-hand information on the implementation of the Noumea Accord. The mission held meetings with many relevant actors in the three provinces, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry for Overseas Territories in Paris. The General Assembly, by its resolution 69/102, approved the report, observations, conclusions and suggested recommendations of the visiting mission. Throughout that period, the Assembly reaffirmed that United Nations visiting missions are an effective means of ascertaining the situation in the Territories, as well as the wishes and aspirations of their inhabitants, and called upon the administering Powers to continue to cooperate

with the Special Committee in the discharge of its mandate and to facilitate visiting missions to the Territories.

13. In compliance with the provisions of General Assembly resolutions and the objectives of the Decade, the representative of New Zealand has continued to participate in the work of the Special Committee regarding Tokelau. The representative of France participated in the work of the Committee during its consideration of the question of New Caledonia in 2014. The delegations of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America have not formally participated in meetings of the Committee in recent years. However, representatives of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America have attended some of the Committee's regional seminars.

14. Informal contacts have continued in order to explore means to improve cooperation between the Committee and the administering Powers and to develop work programmes for the decolonization of specific Territories. During the 2013 and 2014 intersessional periods, the Chair and Bureau held informal consultations with each of the four administering Powers in order to reinvigorate cooperation and partnership with them in addressing the self-determination status of the Territories under their administration. Informal consultations with the representatives of many Non-Self-Governing Territories and a number of other stakeholders concerned with the status of those Territories were also undertaken. A meeting, convened at the request of the Chair of the Special Committee, between the Bureau and the Secretary-General, was held on 12 November 2013. The meeting, the first of its kind held during the intersessional period, was aimed at enhancing the good offices of the Secretary-General in promoting dialogue among all concerned parties in the decolonization agenda. At its 6th meeting, on 24 June 2014, the Special Committee decided to hold intersessional meetings with the Secretary-General on an annual basis in order to sustain efforts to determine innovative approaches to the expeditious implementation of its mandate (see A/AC.109/2014/L.9). Subsequently, the General Assembly adopted resolution 69/107, by which it requested the Secretary-General to meet informally at least once a year with the Chair and the Bureau of the Committee (see para. 7).

B. Security Council

15. During the period under review, the Security Council continued to consider reports of the Secretary-General and adopted resolutions on the situation concerning Western Sahara. Most recently, on 29 April 2014, the Security Council adopted resolution 2152 (2014), extending the mandate of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) until 30 April 2015.

C. Economic and Social Council

16. The Economic and Social Council has considered the question of the implementation of the Declaration by the specialized agencies and other United Nations organizations annually and has adopted resolutions asking the specialized agencies to examine and review conditions in each Territory, so as to take appropriate measures to accelerate progress in the economic and social sectors of

the Territories. It also urged those specialized agencies and organizations of the United Nations system that have not yet provided assistance to the Territories to do so as soon as possible. The Economic and Social Council has considered annually reports of its President on the assistance provided by those organizations to Non-Self-Governing Territories. The Chairman of the Committee participates in the Council's consideration of the relevant item yearly.

D. Secretary-General

17. During the period under review, the Secretary-General has continued to exercise his good offices. As reported in detail previously (A/55/497, paras. 30-31), the Secretariat provides substantive, technical, administrative and information services to the Special Committee in the discharge of its mandate.

18. Given the importance of disseminating information on decolonization to further the objectives of the plan of action, the Department of Public Information has continued to broadcast information on decolonization through all available media and to publicize the work of the United Nations in this field. In 2011, the Web Services Section of the Department launched a redesigned and updated site on the United Nations and decolonization in the six official languages. In 2013 the site had more than a quarter million (253,677) page views in all languages, an increase of 46 per cent over the previous year. In 2014, the Department continued to maintain and update the site, adding new content attracting a growing number of visitors (more than 280,000 page views in the period from April 2013 to March 2014). In 2011, a website dedicated to the International Week of Solidarity with the Peoples of Non-Self-Governing Territories was created and launched in the six official languages. In 2012, the Department worked with the Department of Political Affairs to produce a visual identity for a poster, postcard and online products to mark the Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism. A detailed account of activities in this regard, including services to the media, United Nations television, visitors services and United Nations publications, is presented annually by the Department of Public Information to the Special Committee, which in turn reports to the General Assembly on this matter (see A/AC.109/2011/17; A/AC.109/2012/18; A/AC.109/2013/18; A/AC.109/2014/18).

III. Action taken during the Decade by the specialized agencies

19. The General Assembly and the Special Committee have considered on a yearly basis the question of the implementation of the Declaration by the specialized agencies and international institutions associated with the United Nations. A yearly report is issued on those activities by the President of the Economic and Social Council on the basis of replies received from those bodies. Recent information on their activities with regard to the Third Decade can be found in annex II to the present report.

IV. Support for the Decade by Member States

20. Sections I to IV of the plan of action for the Decade request specific action by Member States and particularly by the administering Powers to assist effectively the

peoples of the Territories in their progress towards self-determination. In addition to the 29 members of the Special Committee, a number of Member States have participated in the work of the Special Committee as administering Powers or observers and have attended its meetings and regional seminars.

21. During the period under review, 14 Member States have provided scholarships to students from the Territories (Algeria, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Brunei Darussalam, Canada, Cuba, India, Mexico, New Zealand, Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Spain and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland). The Secretariat has made those offers public in annual reports.

22. The participation and cooperation of the administering Powers in the work of the Committee has been referred to in paragraphs 11 to 14 above. Specific replies from Member States on their activities to support the Decade are reproduced in the annex to the present report.

V. Conclusions

23. The task of eradicating colonialism remains an unfinished process and requires the sustained and determined efforts of all concerned. Midway through the Third Decade there are encouraging signs of rejuvenation of the work of the Special Committee: the Bureau has held several meetings with each of the four administering Powers and other relevant actors for the first time in a number of years with a view to identifying next steps in the decolonization process and a visiting mission was conducted to New Caledonia in 2014.

24. Building on the progress on dialogue and consensus-building experienced in the first half of the Third Decade, the Special Committee is expected to continue considering the possibility of sending further visiting missions to the Territories at an appropriate time, and to the extent possible in conjunction with annual regional seminars, in consultation with the relevant administering Powers and in accordance with the relevant resolutions on decolonization.

25. I reiterate my call to engage in a new, fully inclusive dialogue about decolonization. The eradication of colonialism, in keeping with the principles of the Charter and relevant resolutions of the United Nations, is a common endeavour that requires the constructive engagement of all concerned — the Special Committee, the administering Powers and the Non-Self-Governing Territories — working on a case-by-case basis.

26. Attention should be focused on accomplishing concrete results with the involvement of all concerned: the Special Committee, the administering Powers and the Non-Self-Governing Territories. In this context, the General Assembly, in its resolution 69/107, called upon the administering Powers to cooperate fully with the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples to develop and finalize, as soon as possible, a constructive programme of work on a case-by-case basis for the Non-Self-Governing Territories to facilitate the implementation of the mandate of the Special Committee and the relevant resolutions on decolonization, including resolutions on specific Territories.

27. During the period under review, some specialized agencies and regional commissions have continued to facilitate the participation of many Non-Self-

Governing Territories in their bodies as observers or associate members, enabling them to become eligible also to participate in world conferences on economic and social issues, a development that has been welcomed in General Assembly resolutions on the subject. For example, in 2011 Tokelau became an associate member of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

28. I encourage all specialized agencies to intensify their engagement with the work of the Special Committee as an important element for the implementation of General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV), including through a more regular participation at the regional seminars on decolonization, upon the invitation of the Special Committee. Furthermore, specialized agencies are also reminded that, in line with the provisions of General Assembly resolutions on the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations, they are requested to report periodically to the Secretary-General on the implementation of those resolutions.

29. Developments in some Territories offer the Committee and administering Powers a unique opportunity to develop decolonization plans on a case-by-case basis, with the participation of the representatives of the Non-Self-Governing Territories. It is an opportunity that the parties concerned must seize in order to accelerate the decolonization process and ensure the implementation of United Nations resolutions on the subject.

30. The Secretariat shall continue to assist the international community to make tangible progress in the decolonization agenda.

Annex I

Replies received from Member States

Argentina

[Original: Spanish]
[25 February 2015]

1. The Argentine Republic once again declares its full support for the decolonization process carried out by the United Nations through its relevant bodies, in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the principles set forth in General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV). The Argentine Republic has a special interest in the successful, prompt and final conclusion of this process and is fully convinced that cooperation among all the States Members of the Organization, in particular the administering Powers, in fulfilment of their obligations under the Charter and the relevant United Nations resolutions, will make it possible to achieve this goal.

2. The decolonization process remains one of the Organization's most important successes and the Argentine Republic has demonstrated its firm commitment to that endeavour by participating actively in the work of the General Assembly on decolonization through its Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) and its Special Committee on decolonization. Argentina has been working in close cooperation with the Special Committee by participating in its successive sessions and in the regional seminars held alternately in the Caribbean and the Pacific, in accordance with the current plan of action.

3. Halfway into the Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, 17 colonial situations remain, in spite of the commitment of the United Nations to bring about an end to this anachronistic scourge that remains a source of frustration for the overwhelming majority of the international community in the twenty-first century.

4. At the same time, the work of the Special Committee during the reporting period reveals promising trends that give rise to optimism. By working constructively to address the special political circumstances of each of the 17 existing colonial situations on a case-by-case basis, the Committee has performed its duties in a creative and innovative manner. For the first time since the Special Committee on decolonization was established in 1961 by General Assembly resolution 1654 (XVI), the General Assembly has requested the Secretary-General, in his capacity as temporary Chair of the Special Committee, to meet informally at least once a year with the Chair and the Bureau of the Committee during the intersessional period, in order to "explore innovative ways of using his good offices to help to advance the decolonization agenda on a case-by-case basis". Indeed, General Assembly resolution 69/107 provides for a mechanism that reflects the Special Committee's central role as the policymaking body on decolonization and establishes its level of relevance and the absolute validity of its mandate. At the same time, the Special Committee has made progress in its relationship with the administering Powers, the Non-Self-Governing Territories and, in cases where sovereignty disputes exist, the representatives of States that are parties thereto. The Special Committee has continued to hold regional seminars in the Caribbean and Pacific regions without

interruption, dispatching a visiting mission to New Caledonia in strict accordance with the case-by-case approach and the Committee's own doctrine, in line with United Nations resolutions, including resolutions on specific Territories.

5. This new momentum in the decolonization agenda of the United Nations is extremely important for the Argentine Republic, given that the question of the Malvinas Islands is on that agenda because the illegal occupation of the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland is still ongoing. Each year, throughout this first half of the Third Decade, the Special Committee on decolonization adopted consensus resolutions that (a) describe the question of the Malvinas Islands as a "special and particular" colonial situation; (b) recognize the existence of a sovereignty dispute between Argentina and the United Kingdom; (c) request the Governments of Argentina and the United Kingdom to resume negotiations in order to find as soon as possible a peaceful, just and lasting solution to the dispute, in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly on the question; and (d) reiterate its support for the mission of good offices of the Secretary-General in order to assist the parties in complying with the request made by the General Assembly in its relevant resolutions. As a sign of the importance that Argentina attaches to the work of the Special Committee on decolonization, the President of the Argentine Republic led the Argentine delegation to the meeting held on 14 June 2012, the first time in the history of the Committee that a Head of State participated in its deliberations. As was recognized by the region as a whole, this reaffirmed the will of the Argentine Government, expressed at the highest political level, to achieve a peaceful and definitive solution to the sovereignty dispute. The question was also considered at frequent meetings held by the Argentine Government with the authorities of the Bureau of the Special Committee and the United Nations Secretariat, including the meetings that took place on 28 January and 8 December 2014. The Chair of the Special Committee had invited Argentina to attend those meetings as a party to the sovereignty dispute under consideration by the Committee. The Secretary in charge of matters relating to the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas at the Argentine Ministry of Foreign Affairs had attended those meetings.

6. The question of the Malvinas Islands was also considered by other United Nations bodies during the reporting period. Besides being one of the issues that attracted the greatest attention during the meetings of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) of the General Assembly dedicated to the general debate on decolonization held in this first half of the Third International Decade, the question of the Malvinas Islands has repeatedly attracted the attention of the Secretary-General in fulfilment of the existing mission of good offices entrusted to him by the General Assembly and the powers assigned to him by the Charter of the United Nations, which include a mandate aimed at finding a solution to the sovereignty dispute between Argentina and the United Kingdom over the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas.

7. Argentina has held repeated meetings, at the highest level, with the Secretary-General in that very context, regularly transmitting information to him and requesting that he make his best efforts in carrying out his mission. The leaders of all Latin American and Caribbean countries and of Spain and Portugal also recalled

the validity and importance of that mission in numerous multilateral statements. Indeed, the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), the Ibero-American Summits, the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR) and the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) have reiterated the validity of the mission of good offices and, on occasion, have made ad hoc representations to the Secretary-General requesting him to renew his efforts to fulfil the mission and to keep the leaders of each bloc informed accordingly. During a meeting held in New York on 6 April 2011, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Argentina delivered a note from the Heads of State and Government of UNASUR addressed to the Secretary-General (A/65/812). The General Secretariat of UNASUR again addressed the matter during the meeting held with the Secretary-General in New York on 2 April 2012, delivering a new declaration by the Heads of State and Government of UNASUR (A/66/815) which had been transmitted via a note verbale dated 26 March 2012 and in which the leaders renewed their request in that regard. In March 2012, the Permanent Representative of Chile to the United Nations transmitted to the Secretary-General the request by the Heads of State and Government of CELAC that he should renew his efforts to fulfil this mission. On 26 March 2013, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Cuba and Uruguay and the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Peru accompanied the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Argentina, as representatives of CELAC, MERCOSUR and UNASUR, respectively, to the meeting held with the Secretary-General as part of his mission of good offices, to call on him to make his best efforts in carrying out the mission and to express the strong support of the region for the legitimate sovereignty rights of the Argentine Republic in the sovereignty dispute over the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas. The Ministers for Foreign Affairs also held a meeting with the Bureau of the Special Committee on decolonization at which they expressed the strong support of the region for the legitimate rights of Argentina in the sovereignty dispute over the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas. More recently, in their joint communiqué adopted on 17 December 2014 following the forty-seventh ordinary meeting of the Council of the Common Market, the Presidents of the MERCOSUR States parties and associated States instructed the President Pro Tempore to reiterate the request to the Secretary-General to renew his efforts, in the light of the "serious concern" that they had expressed in their latest declaration over the fact that there has been no substantial progress in the negotiations in the 50 years that have passed since the adoption of resolution 2065 (XX) by the General Assembly. The Presidents of the MERCOSUR States parties and associated States recalled that 2015 marked the fiftieth anniversary of the adoption of General Assembly resolution 2065 (XX), which was the first resolution to refer specifically to the question of the Malvinas Islands and which has been reiterated up to the present day by successive resolutions of the General Assembly and the Special Committee on decolonization, and noted with satisfaction the significant contribution made by the United Nations Special Committee on decolonization in its consideration of the question over the 50 years since the adoption of resolution 2065 (XX) (A/69/775). Likewise, in their special declaration on the question of the Malvinas Islands, adopted on 28 and 29 January 2015 on the occasion of the third Summit of CELAC, the Heads of State and Government of CELAC also recalled the fiftieth anniversary of the adoption of General Assembly resolution 2065 (XX) in the same terms and, in that context, instructed the President Pro Tempore to request the Secretary-General of the United

Nations "to renew his efforts to carry out the mission of good offices entrusted to him by the General Assembly through successive resolutions, with a view to achieving the resumption of negotiations aimed at finding, as soon as possible, a peaceful solution to the above-mentioned dispute, and to inform them of the progress made in the fulfilment of that mission".

8. During this first half of the Third International Decade, the Presidents of the General Assembly and the Security Council have also received repeated communications from Argentina related to the question of the Malvinas Islands. They have also received Argentine Ministers for Foreign Affairs who have conveyed to them the concerns of the entire region surrounding the repeated unilateral activities of the United Kingdom in the area it illegally occupies in the South Atlantic, especially in relation to the growing militarization and exploration and exploitation of renewable and non-renewable natural resources. On 10 February 2012, the Argentine Minister for Foreign Affairs held meetings with the Secretary-General and the Presidents of the General Assembly and the Security Council and made a presentation (A/66/696-S/2012/86) on the militarization of the South Atlantic by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. In the presentation, the Argentine Government alerted the international community to the dispatch by the United Kingdom of a nuclear submarine with the capacity to transport nuclear weapons to the South Atlantic, to the British refusal to provide any information that would confirm or refute that fact, and to the breach of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, to which the United Kingdom is a party, by introducing nuclear weapons into the South Atlantic.

9. In addition to the United Nations, many international bodies and regional and bi-regional forums have considered the question of the Malvinas Islands in this first half of the Third Decade, joining the call that the United Nations continues to make year after year and giving the question greater international weight. In the various multilateral bodies to which they belong, all the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean have supported the legitimate sovereignty rights of the Argentine Republic over the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas. In addition to CELAC, MERCOSUR, UNASUR, the Latin American Integration Association (ALADI) and the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA), the countries of Africa have also added their voices at the Africa-South America Summits. The Organization of American States (OAS), the Ibero-American Summits, the South American and Arab Countries Summits, the zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic, the Group of 77 (G-77) and China, and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) have called repeatedly for the resumption of bilateral negotiations. Several of these forums have urged the United Kingdom to comply with the mandate set out in General Assembly resolution 31/49, to cease its unilateral actions while the islands are going through the process recommended by the United Nations, and to refrain from modifying the situation by illegally exploring and exploiting renewable and non-renewable natural resources in the area under occupation. UNASUR, MERCOSUR and ALBA have decided, among other supportive measures, to close their ports to any vessel flying the illegal "flag" of the islands and to exchange information concerning any vessels or marine structures travelling to the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands with cargo to be used for illegal hydrocarbon and/or mining activities on the Argentine continental shelf and thus prevent the consolidation of these activities. More recently, the Latin

American Energy Organization, G-77 and China, and MERCOSUR have made statements recognizing the right of the Argentine Republic to take legal action against unauthorized hydrocarbon exploration and exploitation activities in the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas. Repeated statements have also been made in the region condemning the growing military presence of the United Kingdom in the South Atlantic. MERCOSUR, UNASUR, the Rio Group, the South American and Arab Countries Summit, and the zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic have also made statements in that regard following the Argentine complaint to the President of the General Assembly, the President of the Security Council and the Secretary-General.

10. Nevertheless, despite the strong mandate of the international community, reiterated in these numerous calls, and the permanent willingness of Argentina, the United Kingdom remains reluctant to resume the bilateral negotiations, repeatedly perpetrates unilateral acts contrary to international law, and claims the right of the British population transplanted to the islands to exercise self-determination.

11. Argentina recognizes the principle of self-determination, under General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV), in relation to all peoples subjected to alien subjugation, domination and exploitation. As that characterization does not apply to the question of the Malvinas Islands, this question has been described expressly as a "special and particular" case of decolonization involving a sovereignty dispute between Argentina and the United Kingdom that must be resolved in a peaceful and negotiated manner, taking due account of the interests of the inhabitants of the islands.

12. In contrast, the United Kingdom has a questionable and contradictory voting record in the General Assembly on questions of colonialism and self-determination. As the Argentine Minister for Foreign Affairs pointed out before the Special Committee on decolonization at its meeting of 20 June 2013, with regard to the 15 territories currently on the Committee's agenda, excluding Gibraltar and the Malvinas Islands, the United Kingdom did not support 88 per cent of the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly. Argentina, on the other hand, supported 81 per cent of those resolutions. As regards the eight cases in which the United Kingdom is the colonial Power — again excluding Gibraltar and the Malvinas Islands — the United Kingdom failed to support 90 per cent of the relevant resolutions, whereas Argentina supported 80 per cent. Lastly, the United Kingdom has never supported a resolution adopted by the General Assembly on recommendation of the Special Committee regarding former British colonial territories that are now independent countries and members of the Committee. Argentina has never voted against such a resolution. As regards the transplanted nature of the islands' inhabitants, the Argentine Government can only reaffirm that the inhabitants are British subjects who have stayed on the islands under the protection of a strict migratory policy that has, in general, discriminated systematically against mainland Argentines.

13. This is why the unlawful vote that was unilaterally held in March 2013 by the United Kingdom, which it alone defines as a "referendum", was aimed at the inhabitants which that country implanted in the Malvinas Islands. The vote was intended to ask the inhabitants about questions that gloss over the true legal status of the islands. It is surprising that the United Kingdom should boast about the results of a so-called "referendum" whose predictable outcome, while it confirms

that the subjects in question are British, does not modify the colonial nature of the issue and cannot bring an end to the dispute. This was effectively a unilateral British act and therefore a violation of General Assembly resolution 31/49. Attempting to place the solution to the dispute in the hands of a group of subjects of the occupying Power, which is one of the two parties to the dispute, distorts the letter and spirit of the principle of self-determination of peoples. Clearly the vote was not attended by "international observers", whom British diplomats sought out in vain, but rather by a handful of individuals acting in their personal capacity, because of the United Nations resolutions, particularly resolution 31/49. Nor was the illegitimate vote recognized in any way by the United Nations or other organizations; indeed, it was rejected by numerous and varied countries and regional forums, including MERCOSUR, UNASUR and ALBA.

14. Decolonization and self-determination are not synonymous. Self-determination is one of the mechanisms for implementing decolonization, but it is not the only one, as resolution 1514 (XV) itself contains, in paragraph 6, another principle: that of preserving a country's national unity and territorial integrity. It is this principle that takes precedence in the question of the Malvinas Islands, because it is the territorial integrity of the Argentine Republic which is disrupted. That is how the situation was understood in the ten resolutions of the General Assembly (2065 (XX), 3160 (XXVIII), 31/49, 37/9, 38/12, 39/6, 40/21, 41/40, 42/19 and 43/25) and in all the resolutions adopted so far by the Special Committee on decolonization, which describe the question of the Malvinas Islands as a special and particular colonial situation. That description reflects the specific circumstances of the question, namely that the United Kingdom usurped the islands by force in 1833, expelled the Argentine population and authorities who had been living there publicly and peacefully, prevented their return and replaced them with its own population. To remove any doubt on the issue, in 1985, the General Assembly expressly rejected, by a clear majority, two British attempts to introduce the principle of self-determination into the draft resolution on the question of the Malvinas Islands. Owing to the specific nature of the case, none of the General Assembly resolutions on the question accepts, states or assumes that such a principle can apply. These are the same resolutions invoked by other organizations, such as the Organization of American States in its regional declarations, and other regional and biregional forums mentioned above. It is worth stating clearly once again that Argentina has nothing against the British inhabitants of the Malvinas Islands. The commitment to defend their interests and way of life at the highest institutional level is enshrined in the Constitution of the Argentine Republic. Argentina has demonstrated this commitment in various ways, including through the guarantees it offered for 17 years beginning in 1966 when the two countries were negotiating on sovereignty. Nonetheless, the fact that the interests of the British inhabitants of the Malvinas Islands are respected cannot entitle them to any claim of a right to self-determination. This is not just the opinion of Argentina but the opinion of the international community, as expressed in particular in resolutions of the General Assembly and its Decolonization Committee.

15. For this reason, instead of now distorting and falsifying historical events which it has acknowledged and whose consequences it also understands, the United Kingdom should respect the call of the General Assembly and the international community in its various forums for a solution to the sovereignty dispute and immediately resume negotiations with Argentina on sovereignty over the Malvinas

Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas, in order to find a just and definitive solution to the dispute. Since the United Kingdom was able to do so beginning in 1966, following the adoption of resolution 2065 (XX), and for almost two decades negotiated bilaterally with Argentina on various formulas to resolve the sovereignty dispute, even with the de facto Governments of the dictatorships to which Argentina was subjected, the hope is that it will comply with the obligation imposed by the international community and international law and resume negotiations on sovereignty with a democratic, pluralistic Argentina committed to multilateralism, international law and the peaceful settlement of international disputes. In so doing, the United Kingdom would be acting with the same lawfulness and responsibility that it demands of the rest of the international community from its privileged position in the United Nations.

16. Argentina reiterates its full willingness to resume negotiations on sovereignty as established by the international community. It also reiterates its equally full willingness to cooperate with the United Kingdom on practical issues deriving from the de facto situation in the South Atlantic, with due juridical protection and with the purpose of creating a framework that would allow both parties to resume the negotiations called for by the international community. However, Argentina must once again express its concern at the persistence of the United Kingdom in conducting unilateral activities in the disputed area, in violation of General Assembly resolution 31/49, as it was those same unilateral acts by the United Kingdom which prevented the continuation of bilateral cooperation on the relevant issues, as reported at the time by the Government of Argentina to the United Nations (see, inter alia, A/60/593 and A/61/827). Besides seriously harming the economic capacity of the Argentine Republic, as recognized by the Group of 77 and China, this unilateral and illegal activity has been firmly protested by Argentina and rejected by the numerous international forums described above. Argentina will not permit the plundering of the natural resources of the Argentine sea. Such arbitrary exploitation, without consultation, is contrary to international law, as it contravenes General Assembly resolution 31/49, which calls upon the two parties to refrain from taking decisions that would imply introducing unilateral modifications in the situation. To illustrate the magnitude of the harm suffered by Argentina, it must be recalled that each year, the United Kingdom steals fishing resources valued at more than $600 million and also collects more than $34 million for various types of licences illegitimately granted to fishing enterprises for terms of up to 25 years. As for hydrocarbons, any prospecting for and exploitation of hydrocarbons on the Argentine continental shelf not authorized by the Argentine State is illegal and subject to administrative, civil and criminal penalties, and is cause for concern for the Argentine Government, owing to the potential contamination of the marine environment that could result from the illegitimate hydrocarbon operations in areas surrounding the islands.

17. The year 2015 is doubly emblematic. Midway through the Third International Decade, some progress and challenges have been recorded, as mentioned above. The international community must rise to the occasion and continue to give the Special Committee on decolonization the tools and mandates necessary to bring an end to this scourge that is inconceivable in the twenty-first century. One such challenge is the question of the Malvinas Islands. It was precisely 50 years ago that the General Assembly adopted the famous resolution 2065 (XX), which established the method

that the two parties must adopt to find a peaceful and lasting solution to the sovereignty dispute over the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas. That resolution was followed by nine others reproducing the same mandate, and by other resolutions adopted so far by the Special Committee on decolonization. Argentina is genuinely committed to advancing the method set forth by the General Assembly and, therefore, the international community, for the two parties in the sovereignty dispute to find a solution: to continue engaging in a dialogue under the same conditions that existed in 1965, when the General Assembly, reflecting Argentine arguments, acknowledged in its resolution 2065 (XX) the existence of the sovereignty dispute between the United Kingdom and Argentina and established that the dispute was to be resolved through bilateral negotiations. This year, Argentina is joining the rest of Latin America and the Caribbean to evoke, commemorate and celebrate that fifty-year-old instrument, which remains undoubtedly valid. It does so out of its unlimited respect for international law, the peaceful settlement of disputes and multilateralism.

18. The people and Government of Argentina attach great importance and priority to their ability to [sic] again exercise effective sovereignty over the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas, while respecting the way of life of their inhabitants and abiding by the principles of international law, a State policy enshrined in the Constitution of Argentina as a permanent and irrevocable goal. The Argentine Republic trusts that the work of the Special Committee on decolonization will help to ensure compliance with all the resolutions adopted by that body in relation to the question of the Malvinas Islands. It also trusts that the United Kingdom will respond to the calls resulting from the Secretary-General's good offices mandate and will assume the responsibility that is doubly incumbent on it as a permanent member of the Security Council, by accepting its obligation to peacefully resolve this dispute in accordance with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and with General Assembly resolutions on the question of the Malvinas Islands. As the first half of the Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism is ending and the fiftieth anniversary of resolution 2065 (XX) is being commemorated, it is worth remembering that for the United Nations, the continuation of colonialism in all its forms and manifestations is a crime which constitutes a violation of the Charter of the United Nations, the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples and the principles of international law, as established by the General Assembly in its resolution 2621 (XXV). Fifty years later, crimes of colonialism persist and it is our obligation to put an end to them; the international community and the Secretary-General can count on the complete willingness and efforts of the Argentine Republic to contribute to their final eradication.

Australia

[Original: English]
[26 February 2015]

1. We note that the relevant paragraphs of the plan of action that request action from Member States (other than administering Power Member States) are paragraphs 16 to 18. We are pleased to note the following actions taken by Australia pursuant to these paragraphs.

2. Australia supports Pacific regional organizations, including the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (AUD 4.05 million, 2014-15), the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (AUD 17 million in core and AUD 3.2 million in fisheries programme funding, 2014-15) and the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (over AUD 5 million, 2014-15) to support sustainable development, environmental management, disaster risk reduction and the effective management of fisheries and marine resources. Tokelau is a member of the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency and American Samoa, French Polynesia, Guam, New Caledonia and Tokelau are members of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community and the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environmental Programme. Of note, in March 2015, the Secretariat of the Pacific Community hosted a workshop on the future of inshore fisheries in New Caledonia, with funding from Australia. Australia also supports a wide range of international and regional environmental partnerships through our support of the Global Environment Fund and the United Nations agencies and research networks.

3. In 2010, Australia and France-New Caledonia signed a Declaration of Intention in relation to bilateral collaboration on Coral Sea conservation. As part of this collaboration, Australia hosted a Coral Sea workshop in Brisbane in March 2013, which brought together researchers from relevant countries to facilitate enhanced understanding of transboundary issues of interest to collaborative management of the Coral Sea. Australia remains interested in continuing to exchange information on marine conservation management under the Declaration of Intention and on keeping track of the progress of the marine planning process of New Caledonia.

Mexico

[Original: Spanish]
[26 February 2015]

General position on colonialism

1. Mexico believes that the United Nations plays a vital role in outstanding decolonization processes, particularly in the context of the Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism (2011-2020).

2. Mexico supports the inalienable right of peoples to self-determination, as set out in its foreign policy principles.

Question of the Malvinas Islands

3. Mexico recognizes the rights of the Argentine Republic in the sovereignty dispute with the United Kingdom over the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and surrounding maritime areas.

4. Mexico has insisted that the dialogue between the two countries should remain open and has reiterated its interest in Argentina and the United Kingdom resuming negotiations with a view to reaching a just, peaceful and final solution that is mutually acceptable to the parties, within an institutional framework and in a spirit of mutual respect, in accordance with international law.

5. Mexico supports the resolutions and declarations that the General Assembly, the Organization of American States, the Ibero-American Summit and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), and other regional and international forums have adopted on the topic.

6. Mexico encourages the parties to avail themselves of the offers of good offices of the Secretary-General and of mediation of the President of the General Assembly.

7. On various occasions, Mexico has urged the United Kingdom and Argentina to avoid unilateral actions and decisions that contravene resolutions on the topic and that imply the introduction of unilateral modifications which might affect their rights in the dispute while it remains unresolved.

8. In regard to the Argentine initiative to seek clarification on the alleged violation of the Treaty of Tlatelolco by the United Kingdom through the control system of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean — which has never previously been used — Mexico continues to hope that the question of the sovereignty of the Malvinas Islands would be resolved peacefully, that the principles contained in the Treaty of Tlatelolco would be preserved, and that the region would remain completely free of nuclear weapons.

Question of Western Sahara

9. Mexico supports the efforts to find a just and lasting solution to the conflict in Western Sahara, in accordance with the resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly, that provides for the right to self-determination of the Sahrawi people to be expressed through a referendum on their future that is considered legitimate by and acceptable to the parties involved.

10. Mexico supports the efforts of the Secretary-General's Personal Envoy Christopher Ross and calls on the parties involved to continue cooperating with him.

11. Concerning the process of negotiations, Mexico states once again that it is important for the parties to show the political will necessary to make concrete progress during the rounds of informal talks and to engage in good-faith negotiations without preconditions, with a view to reaching a lasting and mutually acceptable political solution that will lead to the self-determination of the Sahrawi people.

12. Mexico supports the mandate and work of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO), emphasizing the vital importance of taking the will of the Sahrawi people into consideration. Mexico has also insisted that MINURSO should have a human rights monitoring mandate.

Question of French Polynesia

13. On 17 May 2013, during the debate in the General Assembly, Mexico joined the consensus in adopting resolution 67/265 on the question of French Polynesia, although it expressed reservations on the manner in which the resolution was adopted. It would have preferred the request made by the new authorities of the Territory for a postponement of consideration of the draft resolution to have been approved, with a view to establishing an official dialogue with the sponsors of the resolution and with the General Assembly itself.

Spain

[Original: Spanish]
[27 February 2015]

1. Decolonization is one of the priorities of the United Nations and one of the areas in which the Organization has made the most progress since its inception. Owing to that patient and dedicated effort, the end of colonialism is now one step closer. Nevertheless, colonial situations remain (the territorial integrity of Spain is affected by colonialism in the case of the British Non-Self-Governing Territory of Gibraltar). These situations remind us that we must not waver in our commitment to eradicate this twenty-first century historical anachronism, especially now that we are midway through the Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism (2011-2020) and its plan of action, which Spain fully supports. The ultimate goal should be the full implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, all the relevant resolutions and decisions of the General Assembly, and the principles set out in the Declaration itself (resolution 1514 (XV)).

2. The resolutions and decisions on decolonization which the General Assembly adopts every year, either by consensus or with the support of a large majority of Member States, attest to the international community's consensus on the need to eliminate the scourge of colonialism.

3. Spain has been collaborating with the United Nations to bring an end to colonialism and to implement the measures stipulated for the Third International Decade and its plan of action since its adoption. Spain participates constructively and actively in the work of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (Special Committee), at meetings of the Fourth Committee (Special Political and Decolonization Committee) of the General Assembly, and in the regional seminars on decolonization that have been held alternately in the Caribbean and the Pacific regions.

4. Spain has supported the work of the Special Committee since its establishment in 1961. The Special Committee has a major role to play in the implementation of resolution 1514 (XV), and the measures stipulated for in the Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism (2011-2020). It has played a key part in the success achieved towards eradicating colonialism. The Committee has helped to develop the doctrinal basis of the decolonization process through its consideration of the situations of the Non-Self-Governing Territories. It has used a case-by-case approach in that regard, distinguishing between scenarios in which the principle of self-determination takes precedence and those in which the principle of territorial integrity takes precedence, and recognizing that there are specific colonial situations that are the result of sovereignty disputes.

5. The Special Committee has been able to use the support provided by the United Nations Secretariat, which, for instance, prepares annual reports on the Non-Self-Governing Territories through its Decolonization Unit. The reports, to which Spain contributes diligently, serve as the basis for Committee discussions.

6. The Special Committee also uses visiting missions to learn firsthand about the real situation in the Non-Self-Governing Territories. Spain supports these missions, as it does the Committee's practice of requiring the prior approval of the sovereign States that are party to sovereignty disputes before visiting Territories involved in such disputes. This condition is fully consistent with General Assembly resolution 850 (IX).

7. Held in a more informal environment with the active participation of the various stakeholders involved in the decolonization process, the regional seminars have helped to advance the objectives of the Third International Decade. Spain is proud to have participated constructively in these seminars, including in the most recent one, held in May 2014, in Denarau, Fiji.

8. The Special Committee has been able to adopt innovative approaches to revitalize its work, including holding informal consultations with the administering Powers and other States and actors. Since the launch of these consultations in 2013, Spain has already participated in two meetings with the Bureau of the Special Committee, where methods of strengthening cooperation in order to resolve the question of Gibraltar and fulfil the mandate of the United Nations were discussed.

9. The work of the Special Committee has been acknowledged in General Assembly resolution 69/107. In paragraph 14 of the resolution, the Assembly "requests the Secretary-General, President pro tempore of the Special Committee, to meet informally at least once a year with the Chair and the Bureau of the Committee during the intersessional period, in order to explore innovative ways of using his good offices to help to advance the decolonization agenda on a case-by-case basis". In so doing, the General Assembly seeks to give decolonization work a major boost, one that Spain can only welcome.

10. Through the Fourth Committee, the General Assembly has a significant role to play in the decolonization process, codifying the doctrine, driving the process and endorsing the work of the Special Committee. Spain also participates actively in relevant General Assembly meetings, supporting resolutions and decisions proposed by the Fourth Committee.

11. Spain wishes to express its appreciation to the General Assembly, its Special Political and Decolonization Committee and the Special Committee for following up on the question of Gibraltar, an anachronistic situation at this juncture, with the Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism (2011-2020) well under way, and one that directly affects the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Spain. Spain also welcomes the repeated calls for a negotiated solution between itself and the United Kingdom that takes into account the interests of the inhabitants of both Gibraltar and Campo de Gibraltar.

12. As the Special Committee has noted on several occasions, the decolonization process should proceed on a "case-by-case" basis. Gibraltar has specific features that are not present in other Territories awaiting decolonization. In that regard, Spain wishes to recall that Gibraltar was occupied by Great Britain on behalf of a third party. It was artificially populated with numerous waves of people brought from elsewhere and, as if that was not enough, it was later expanded with territory illegally seized from Spain. The occupation occurred in 1704, on behalf of Archduke Charles of Austria, pretender to the Spanish throne, in the context of the War of the Spanish Succession. The settlement of the colony, planned by the

occupier, took place well after the conquest; the Spaniards who inhabited Gibraltar until 1704, the real Gibraltarians, were forced to leave the place and settled in neighbouring San Roque, where the local council hall has since been known as the "Town Hall of the City of Gibraltar in San Roque". The resulting divide in the region persists to this day. Moreover, the United Kingdom illegally seized other territories that were not ceded under the 1713 Treaty of Utrecht, which ended the War of the Spanish Succession. In the nineteenth century, Spain allowed the United Kingdom — for humanitarian reasons — to set up temporary camps to prevent contagion from the population of the Rock, which had been stricken by an epidemic of yellow fever. The epidemic ended, but the British, far from appreciating the humanitarian gesture of Spain, did not withdraw. On the contrary, despite Spanish protests, those settlements on Spanish soil became permanent. In 1909 the United Kingdom built a fence, delimiting the area and thereby attempting to consolidate the illegal occupation of Spanish territory. The isthmus was therefore not ceded by Spain to the United Kingdom under the Treaty of Utrecht and remains under Spanish sovereignty. The fact that it has been continuously occupied by the British is not sufficient to meet the requirements of international law for the acquisition of sovereignty. Spain has always stated that the occupation of the isthmus is illegal and contrary to international law and, therefore, has consistently called for its unconditional return.

13. The United Nations has acknowledged the specificity of the process of decolonization for Gibraltar by noting that the colonial situation of Gibraltar undermines the territorial integrity of Spain. This was reflected in General Assembly resolution 2353 (XXII) of 19 December 1967. For four decades, the General Assembly itself has been urging the administering Power (United Kingdom) and Spain to resolve all their differences on this issue through bilateral negotiations. Year after year, a decision adopted by the General Assembly by consensus recalls this mandate of bilateral dialogue and specifies the framework in which the negotiated solution must be reached, namely, the Anglo-Spanish declaration adopted in Brussels on 27 November 1984 that gave rise to the so-called Brussels Process a few months later.

14. Accordingly, negotiations on sovereignty, as indicated by the United Nations itself, are the sole responsibility of the Governments of Spain and the United Kingdom, taking into account the interests of the population of Gibraltar and that of Campo de Gibraltar (in respect of which Spain and the United Kingdom are currently negotiating the establishment of a new "ad hoc" mechanism for regional cooperation in which, unlike in the defunct Trilateral Forum, the local authorities of Gibraltar and the competent local and regional Spanish authorities will be able to participate alongside Spain and the United Kingdom).

15. For years, the Spanish Government has been urging the United Kingdom to resume without delay the above-mentioned bilateral negotiations — which have been interrupted for many years — with a view to bringing to an end the colonial situation of Gibraltar. Since 2006, the response of the United Kingdom has been that it will not initiate talks with Spain on sovereignty issues without the consent of the local Gibraltar authorities. The Spanish Government considers that this position contravenes the doctrine established in various General Assembly resolutions and

decisions.[2] It also violates the commitment made by the United Kingdom to Spain in 1984 and expressed explicitly in the Brussels Declaration of 1984.

16. Spain, one of the oldest sovereign States in Europe and on the planet, is thus enduring a colonial situation for which there can be no justification in the twenty-first century. The existence of a colony in Europe well into the Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism (2011-2020) is a historical anachronism. For the historical and legal reasons described above, the United Nations has stated clearly that the principle that should govern the decolonization process for Gibraltar is not that of self-determination, but that of restoring the territorial integrity of Spain, which is undermined by the presence of a colony on its soil. In this regard, it is worth recalling that every year, in the conclusions of the regional seminars on decolonization, reference is made not only to the right to self-determination, but also to the principle of territorial integrity.

17. Spain would like the important work on decolonization that the United Nations and the Special Committee in particular have been doing for decades — which Spain has always appreciated and actively supported — to be taken into account and be treated with the respect that it clearly deserves. The only way to show that respect is to comply with General Assembly decisions urging the Governments of Spain and the United Kingdom to reach a definitive solution to the question of Gibraltar in the light of the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and applicable principles.

[2] General Assembly resolution 2070 (XX) invited the Governments of Spain and the United Kingdom to begin without delay negotiations on the sovereignty of Gibraltar; General Assembly resolution 2353 (XXII) provides that any colonial situation which partially or completely destroys the national unity and territorial integrity of a country is incompatible with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and specifically with paragraph 6 of General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) on decolonization in general; General Assembly resolution 2429 (XXIII) requested the United Kingdom as administering Power to terminate the colonial situation in Gibraltar no later than 1 October 1969, stating that the continuation of the colonial situation in Gibraltar is incompatible with the purposes and principles of the Charter.

Annex II

Replies received from United Nations bodies, specialized agencies and international institutions associated with the United Nations

A. Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations

1. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) continues to provide technical assistance in the areas of food security, agriculture, forestry and fisheries activities, as well as rural development in general.

2. Activities undertaken in the context of the Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism include: participation of Montserrat over the last 10 years in regional forestry workshops organized by the Caribbean Subgroup of the Latin-American and Caribbean Forestry Commission; and the involvement and participation in 2014 of United Kingdom Overseas Territories in important regional fisheries and aquaculture-related activities convened mainly by the Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission. Tokelau is one of the participating countries under the subregional FAO Technical Cooperation Programme Project "Strategies and capacity-building in Pacific Small Islands Development States to address Climate Change impacts on Jurisdictional claims". FAO also continued to work closely to assist small island developing States following the conferences held in Barbados and Mauritius, as well as with preparations for the recent third International Conference for Small Island and Developing States held in Samoa in 2014.

B. World Health Organization

1. In order to bring World Health Organization (WHO) technical assistance closer to the Pacific countries and areas, WHO has established three WHO Representative Offices in the Pacific, namely, the WHO Representative Office in the South Pacific, located in Suva, Fiji; the WHO Representative Office for American Samoa, Cooks Island, Niue, Tokelau and Samoa, located in Apia, Samoa; and the WHO Representative Office for the Solomon Islands, located in Honiara, Solomon Islands. Furthermore, the Division of Pacific Technical Support of the WHO Regional Office for the Western Pacific was established in Suva in 2010, in order to better coordinate WHO assistance and collaboration with other health partners and to respond to the specific needs of Pacific countries in a more timely manner.

2. The WHO Multi-Country Cooperation Strategy for the Pacific 2013-2017 has been developed through a consultative process with the Governments of the Pacific Island countries and areas, including Non-Self-Governing Territories in the Pacific. The Strategy represents a medium-term vision for WHO technical cooperation in support of their national health policies, strategies and plans, while contributing to the WHO organization-wide plans.

3. As a result of the Multi-Country Cooperation Strategy, Non-Self-Governing Territories, such as American Samoa and Tokelau, with support of WHO, have developed their own country cooperation strategy, which offers a vision of healthy islands and provides a guide for WHO cooperation in addressing major health issues. The country cooperation strategy represents a medium-term vision for WHO

technical cooperation in support of their national health policies, strategies and plans, while contributing to the WHO organization-wide plans.

4. Through the Division of Pacific Technical Support and three WHO Representative Offices, WHO technical assistance reaches the territories in the Pacific. This includes regular contact with country counterparts focusing on support for countries' annual review and planning processes. Other areas of responsibility include ensuring that work is aligned with national plans; developing WHO support plans for countries based on national health plans; and coordinating technical support to assist countries.

5. For example, WHO has supported the Ministry of Health in French Polynesia to develop a national plan to combat non-communicable diseases, and they have also been included in the WHO Suicide Trends in At-Risk Territories (START) project. In New Caledonia, WHO works with the local government to develop a non-communicable diseases response plan, with a specific focus on tobacco control. In Guam, WHO has provided technical support to the development of a salt reduction action plan and conducted training on strategic health communication with particular focus on salt reduction. In Tokelau, WHO has provided technical and financial support to develop evidence of risk factors of non-communicable diseases through a stepwise survey.

6. Territories endemic for lymphatic filariasis, French Polynesia, American Samoa and New Caledonia, joined the WHO Pacific programme to eliminate lymphatic filariasis (PacELF). WHO and these territories are also leveraging the work to eliminate lymphatic filariasis to increase control of other neglected tropical diseases as well.

7. WHO is working with the Departments of Health in Guam and American Samoa to roll out the Pacific Open Learning Health Net in order to provide continuing professional development opportunity to health professionals through e-learning.

8. WHO, working with its partners, has also supported water safety planning for French Polynesia and New Caledonia. Drinking water safety planning is considered one of the most effective means of ensuring the safety of the drinking water supply from catchment to consumer. This work aimed to strengthen collaboration and learning between Pacific countries and territories in technical and sustainability areas of safe drinking-water supply.

C. Region of the Americas

1. Pan American Health Organization (PAHO)/WHO works with its Member States and development partners within the framework of national health policies, strategies, and plans; the respective PAHO/WHO country cooperation strategies; the PAHO Strategic Plan 2014-2019 and the WHO Twelfth General Programme of Work 2014-2019. The organization focuses not only on national health development priorities and related national capacity strengthening, but also on global, regional and subregional health commitments and goals, and on the cross-cutting themes of gender, human rights, equity and ethnicity.

2. The PAHO/WHO Office of Eastern Caribbean Countries, located in Barbados, leads WHO technical cooperation with the United Kingdom Overseas Territories of

Anguilla, the British Virgin Islands and Montserrat, which includes a country programme specialist located in Anguilla to serve the three territories. The PAHO/WHO Office in Jamaica serves Bermuda and the Cayman Islands, and the PAHO/WHO Office in The Bahamas serves the Turks and Caicos Islands. Each of the country offices works with national counterparts and partners to plan, implement, monitor and evaluate a biennial work plan that addresses the territory's priority needs in health, among them universal access to health and universal health coverage, non-communicable disease prevention and control, core capacities for implementing the International Health Regulations (2005) and environmental health, including mitigating the health impact of climate change.

3. The PAHO/WHO Representatives in Barbados, Jamaica and the Bahamas are collaborating closely to support the United Kingdom Overseas Territories in a coherent and coordinated manner, in order to create efficiencies, foster a common understanding of issues relevant to them and enable a unified position in their responses to the United Kingdom and agencies such as PAHO/WHO.